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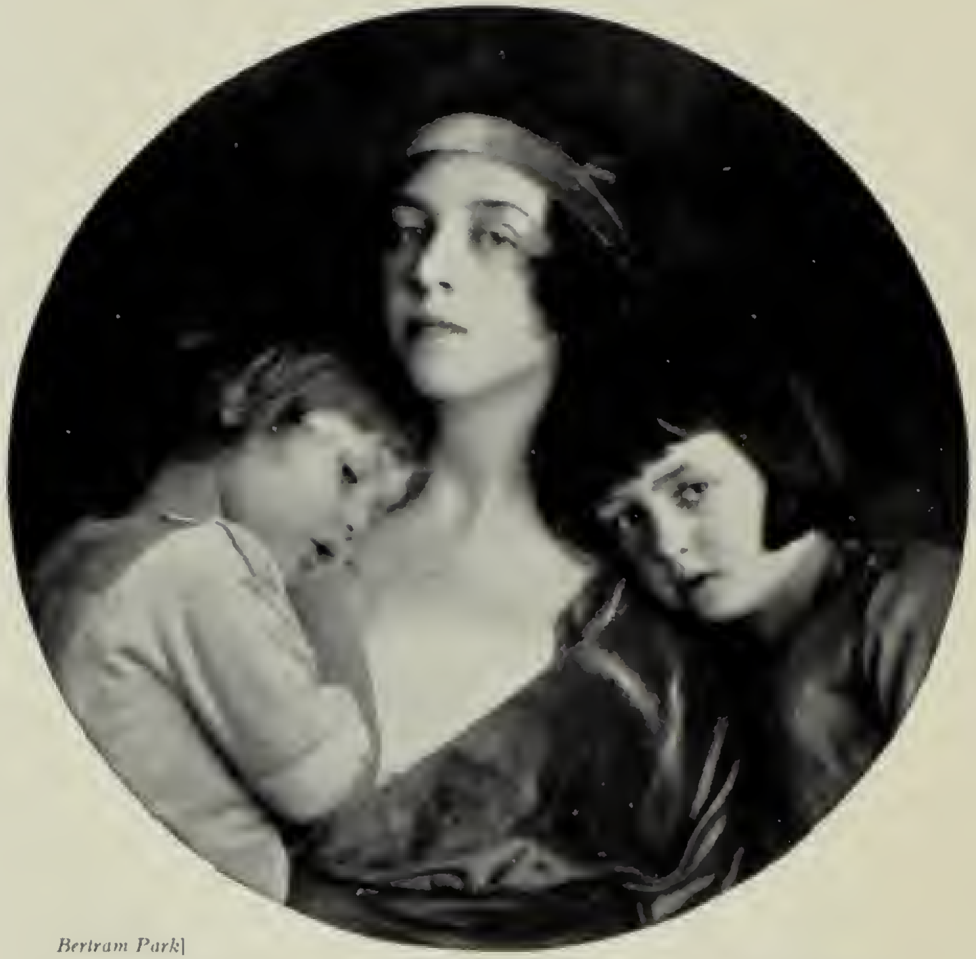

Bertram Park]

CLARE SHERIDAN WITH RICHARD BRINSLEY AND MARY MARGARET

NAKED TRUTH

BY CLARE SHERIDAN

AUTHOR OF "MAYFAIR TO MOSCOW"
"WEST AND EAST," ETC., ETC.

BLUE RIBBON BOOKS
NEW YORK

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"About the passage of our lives there drifts
A constant eddy of foul mutterings,
Which have no import, truth, or evidence.
However clean, our souls must wade waist-deep in
ribaldry."

From "Lanval," by T. E. Ellis
(Lord Howard de Walden).

مكتوب

("Whatever is to be, is written.")

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INTRODUCTION

I HAVE BEEN ADVISED, BY WELL-meaning friends who claim a knowledge of the American public, to revise this book, and to eliminate from it all accounts of occasional failures. The Americans, I am assured, wish only to read of success. But I too know, or knew something of America, and I believe they care for neither success nor failure, they care for a human story. I see life as a card game, with its varying gains and losses, and after a while one counts these, and some come up on the winning side and others on the side of loss or ruin. I have counted my losses and I find myself well on the winning side. A story of success without failure would be an unconvincing, empty story. My intention is not to boost Clare Sheridan, but to write a life as honestly and truthfully as possible, so that any woman reading it may feel, "It might have happened to me" or, "that is how I have felt" or, "that is what I should have done." There are people who, by force of circumstances or of temperament stay at home, and lead sheltered lives. Beyond one's threshold is spread a whole world of rich experience and adventure. Will you stay at home, or will you dare to set out, alone?

I could have stayed, but my temperament necessitated that I should set out.

All stories have a different ending, but the popular end is the happy one, and I have found happiness. That is why I end my story, for what more can I say than, "I am happy"? . . .

CLARE SHERIDAN

Bab-El-M'cid
Biskra, N. Africa

NAKED TRUTH

PART ONE

CHILDHOOD

2

NAKED TRUTH

I

WE WERE BORN AT 18 ALDford Street, Park Lane. The house has been pulled down. It was dark because it turned its back on the sun. Our mother's drawing-room was generally bright with flowers, but our nursery nearly always smelt of gas. It was lit by a gas jet which leaked, and when in winter the windows were opened to let out the smell, they let in the fog.

From the earliest age I longed for country and flowers and sunshine. In summer, when the green grass lawns of Hyde Park began to throw up small daisies, I used to dodge the park-keeper and get through the railings to pick the longest-stemmed ones.

Once we were taken to the country, but I do not know where it was, nor when. I remember only a golden field of buttercups and my brother Peter standing irresolutely at the five-barred gate, unable to persuade himself to go into the field and tread upon them. My brother's name was not really Peter, only I called him so. He was christened Oswald, but, being very small at birth, Nene, our nurse, called him "Weenie." My other brother, Hugh, survived, owing to Nene's care. Like all good English nurses she preferred the "boys." I, being large, healthy, and normal, made no appeal. Nene surnamed me "Poor Clare," and nobody knows why. Perhaps she had a premonition.

My mother was one of three American sisters, brought up in Paris. They were known individually as "the beautiful," "the witty," and "the good." Jennie Churchill was the beautiful one, Leonie Leslie the witty one and my mother qualified as good, but she was also very pretty. Only I do not remember this, for I seldom if ever saw her. We were left almost entirely to the bringing up of Nene, who was loving and efficient, and taught us our manners and our prayers.

Sometimes we visited our Churchill cousins, whose parents, like ours, were preoccupied with worldly things. Our nurses were friends. Winston loved Everest as Peter loved Nene, and she played the same tender, devoted part. Whilst the two women gossiped about "their" children, we played together, or appeared to play. I overheard fragments of adult conversation: Clare was a dull child, Peter lovable, Winston headstrong. Winston had threatened, if he could not get his own way, that he would . . . (and he had searched in his mind for the one thing that would strike his nurse as wickedest) he would "go and worship idols." But he had heart, for once when he had shot a small bird with an air-gun he was overcome with remorse and wept at bedtime.

Winston was a large schoolboy when I was still in the nursery. He had a disconcerting way of looking at me critically and saying nothing. He filled me with awe. His playroom contained from one end to the other a plank table on trestles, upon which were thousands of lead soldiers arranged for battle. He organized wars. The lead battalions were manœuvred into action, peas and pebbles committed great casualties, forts were stormed, cavalry charged, bridges were destroyed—real water tanks engulfed the advancing foe.

All together it was a most impressive show, and played with an interest that was no ordinary child game.

One summer the Churchills rented a small house in the country for the holidays. It was called Banstead. Winston, and Jack his brother, built a log house with the help of the gardener's children, and dug a ditch round it which they contrived to fill with water, and made a drawbridge that really could pull up and down. Here again war proceeded. The fort was stormed. I was hurriedly removed from the scene of action as soon as mud and stones began to fly with effect. But the incident impressed me and Winston became a very important person in my estimation.

II

The colourless monotony of those early days is illumined like a flash of lightning on a summer's night by the occasional presence of one who temporarily acted as a link between me and my mother, from which she relapsed back into the unseen where our child lives could not follow her. On these vivid occasions my mother would send word to the nursery that I was to put on my best frock and be sent downstairs immediately. Then, as I entered the drawing-room that was heavy with the scent of gardenias which always coincided with these visits, my mother would remind me that I must curtsy. The visitor was Milan, King of Servia (the last but one of the Obrenovitch dynasty). He was large and dark, called me his "darling" and said he was my "savage."

Nene declared he was a very wicked man because he was separated from his wife who was very beautiful. (Nene had seen her picture in a newspaper.)

One winter, it was nearly Christmas time, "the boys" and I were recuperating from some childish contagious malady, Milan insisted upon coming up to see us in the nursery. Nene was very angry. She said it did not matter who our mother received downstairs, but that no wicked man ought to be admitted to the children's nursery! He sat by my cot and covered it in lilac and mimosa as well as presents. He showered us with gifts like a real Father Christmas. To the boys he brought soldiers, larger than the ordinary lead variety; there was a fort with cannons, a railway with a station and real signals. For me a musical box with a doll which danced to the tunes, and a long clothes baby; a tea-set and a lot of other things. He was magnificent in his generosity even when it was not Christmas. Whatsoever he did was on a princely scale; he was the Oriental potentate of the fairy tale, lavish, extravagant, violent and despotic. I did not know if he were violent, I only thought he looked so. Despotic he seemed because he liked to order, but he was a big, gentle, tender "savage" and talked to me in a soft melodious voice. I loved him.

Unfortunately his visits were few and far between because his presence in England was undesirable. Once, when he had seemed to stay too long, Queen Victoria sent Sir Arthur Ellis to my mother to beg her to use her influence to get him gone. My mother, naïvely indignant, disclaimed all influence. The Queen's gentleman retired discomfited. The next day I was sent for, my savage was in the drawing-room. He lifted me in his arms and kissed me; he was going, he said, to Paris, and what should he send me?

"A *poupée*!" I entreated.

"A *poupée*? What sort of a *poupée*? Blonde like yourself with curls, and will you call her Clare?"

A few days later he sent his personal attendant from Paris to bring me the *poupée*. It was enshrined in a golden basket taller than myself, large as a year-old baby, and surrounded by beautiful clothes. There were petticoats trimmed with real Valenciennes, and frocks of silk with velvet flowers embossed. Shoes and socks of pink and blue and white, kid gloves and ribboned bonnets. I danced for joy and clapped my hands. For an hour I revelled in the lovely things. "Too lovely," my mother said they were; "too good for a doll—worthy of a *real* baby." Accordingly they disappeared, "put away until you are old enough to appreciate them, dear!" I never saw the things again, but when the doll reappeared years later, it was with towsled matted curls and a broken arm, dressed only in a petticoat.

The last time I saw Milan was in Paris, where my mother had a small apartment. I was older then, and he did not bring me toys. Instead, he brought me a ruby heart, encircled with diamonds. He talked so confidingly that I gathered courage to ask him the one thing that had weighed so long and so heavily on my mind. I could not bear the blot that Nene cast upon the character of my beloved savage, and I felt so sure he could clear it up that I stammered out in all solemnity:

"Why don't you love Queen Natalie?"

I recall my mother's face of horror, and her exclamation about an "enfant terrible," but Milan laughed and drew me close to him.

"I will tell you."

And the story was as follows: When he was first affianced to the beautiful Russian he wove around her sentimental ideals and romantic dreams typical of his temperamental race. Every subtle enchantment was prepared that his resourceful brain could devise, and among others the idea seized him of converting a meadow into a carpet of lilies of the valley! "*Une prairie*," he said, and stretched out his arm to indicate a great distance, "*un champ de muguets.*" But when his bride arrived and he led her out into the meadow that scented the air she remarked coldly that she did not care for lilies of the valley. And that, he said, was an allegory of their life.

"And now does my darling little Clare Consuelo understand?" he asked. And of course she did; the blot had been removed.

III

When I was eight and Peter was seven years old Nene left us, as nurses do, and resigned her place to a foreign governess. She was so sad at leaving that she would not say good-bye, but left us each a small prayer book inscribed with her love.

"Mademoiselle's" great qualification was that being Alsatian she could teach two languages for the price of one. She had a red face and very long greasy hair that descended to her ankles, and which in the process of braiding she coiled several times around her neck. She might conveniently have hanged herself in this fashion, but unfortunately she did not. Peter and I (Hugh was at school) were given entirely into her keeping, morally, spiritually and physically. In those days children were considered a great bore, and the fact of someone being paid to look after them, who could educate their young minds, acquitted parents of all further responsibility. That the hired educator to whom the most impressive years of the children's awakening minds were confided was a person so intellectually and socially inferior that the parents never dreamed of letting her sit in the drawing-room with them, or meet their friends, did not seem in the least to matter.

Thus, according to custom, Peter and I were handed over to be influenced, guarded over and educated. Five years of appalling torture ensued, which have resulted in all kinds of psychological idiosyncrasies, most of which are perhaps worth while, for a friendship of love was cemented between Peter and myself which has proved the only stable reality in a world of disillusions. Mademoiselle had an affinity with all that was dull and dreary. The books that she provided were worn, brown, discoloured, underlined. The print was small, the covers torn; their musty smell created an atmosphere. When we did not know our lists of words she pinched us cruelly on the arm. So hard and so often did she pinch that sometimes I wished I could change into Peter's place so that the other arm might have a turn, for it is very painful to be pinched repeatedly on a bruise that is already blue and pink and green.

When I discovered it was possible to read the book over

Mademoiselle's shoulder I was found out and for ever after made to sit at a table by myself. If at first this seemed a matter for rejoicing I quickly realized my mistake. I had escaped all further pinching, but Peter was pinched for my mistakes. Mademoiselle trusted he would pay me back this double share. Instead, Peter would make a curious covert sign to me by raising his hand, and I equally covertly replied by a lifted finger. It was a sign that we made to each other very often, perhaps ten times a day. Mademoiselle never caught us at it, and if she had she would not have guessed its meaning. Peter was reminding me simply that we were "Allies," that is to say he was my friend through thick and thin and that he loved me. My signalled answer was a corroboration of that alliance, a "thank you" and "I love you too." It was a tightening of the links of friendship against the wedge which she daily tried to drive between us.

For recreation Mademoiselle preferred, instead of the flowered by-ways in the Park where children play, the district towards Bayswater where at that time beggars and drunkards huddled in rows on seats. There was a mad woman who always cursed us as we passed, and a pinched-faced, red-nosed starving man who ate crumbs out of a rag bag, and once a hatless hectic woman with flowing hair tore across our path waving a paper and shrieking "Votes for Women," pursued by a trailing crowd of jeering boys and men. Nor shall I forget a woman in a foaming fit, lying full length upon a seat, who in her writhing rolled off on to the ground with a heavy thud.

These things bred in me a terror of going mad. Curiously enough I discovered years later that Peter still harboured for himself that dreadful obsession.

Once only did Mademoiselle take us to the road that crosses the middle of the Park and along which it was the custom of Queen Victoria to pass on her return from Windsor. There was a considerable crowd that day lining the road each side, and we waited. At last the cavalcade was sighted, outriders in red wearing tall hats passed first, and then the open landau driven by fast horses. A wind was blowing, the Queen had opened a black umbrella and held it firmly against the side on which we were, and that was all we saw after our long standing wait—a black "parapluie." After that Queen Victoria remained mixed up in my mind with all that the Park represented as dull and black and grim.

One day after a tempestuous scene, the nature of which I fail to recall, Mademoiselle said that she meant to drown herself in the Serpentine. She started to run just like the mad woman we had once seen, in the lake's direction. Peter and I ran after her as fast as we could run. People turned to look and it must have been evident from our faces that this was no ordinary game of "catch." Well-dressed children and governesses do not usually behave so indecorously in sedate Hyde Park.

At the lake's edge Mademoiselle subsided on to a seat, and when she had regained her breath told us how much she hated us. If she drowned herself it would be our fault, and the police would arrest and hang us for having caused her death. We promised tearfully that we would always be very good, and she, as reluctantly as possible, allowed herself to be dissuaded from suicide.

In the second year of the reign of Mademoiselle, the scene changed from London to a lodging house at Eastbourne. Grandmamma "Jerome" had died and her three daughters had taken her to New York for burial. Before leaving us our mother expressed a pious hope that we might be speaking fluent French on her return. This hope produced a grievance; Mademoiselle considered that it reflected upon her prowess as a teacher. She said that I never knew my lessons nor seemed to take an interest; if we could not yet speak French it was no fault of hers. I was lazy, stupid and obstinate, a discredit to any teacher. She was tired of my sullen unreceptivity and resolved to beat it out of me. Peter also should be beaten, but not as hard or often. Boys she considered less hateful than girls. Peter did not look so sullen, he was more bearable. Accordingly at the first provocation I was ordered to my room and told to undress. I did so, wonderingly. Mademoiselle called in the housemaid who stood inertly and said:

"Fancy now! And you being such a naughty little girl, who'd ha' thought it?"

I am not sure which I minded most, the beating with a wooden spade or the indignity of being seen with no clothes on by the housemaid. A latent class consciousness was bitterly aroused.

Another day Peter was beaten with the wooden spade, but his punishment was for some offence of mine. This represented another effort on the part of Mademoiselle to drive the wedge between us. Peter, who knew my agony of mind, tried not to cry, so that I would not think he was being hurt. Afterwards, when I was locked in my room, he stood tiptoe on the garden coping to try to see me through the window, and just had time to call out, "Allies! Yes?" and "I love you," before Mademoiselle came and led him out of sight.

One day our mother returned bringing a great box of candy from New York, and our father with her. This was an event; he was a rare and wonderful person who, when not living in America, was in India or Australia, finding gold! Always it had been understood that he was making a fortune for us. When he appeared in the lodging-house by the sea he seemed curiously out of place. Even the biggest arm-chair was too small for him, but he was all smiles, and his voice was deep like a pirate's voice. Our mother bade us recite some fables of La Fontaine to him, but he laughed, said that French was "a ridiculous language," and would not listen. Peter climbed on to his knee and asked for the story of his adventures in Australia. I tried to get close to him by climbing on to the arm of his chair.

Suddenly his smile faded, he turned on me severely:

"Don't be so clumsy, child! You have stepped on my varnished shoes."

It was the third year of the reign of Mademoiselle and the scene shifted to a castle on the Rhine. "Sommerberg" was the summer residence of old Count Hatzfeldt, the German Ambassador to London, whose wife was an American and a friend of our mother's. The house stood on a hill-top with deep impenetrable woods behind, and sloping vineyards in front. It was bathed in sun all day and there were a variety of wild flowers, butterflies, brilliant grasshoppers and green-bellied lizards. The house overflowed with parties, the English children and their governess were not a little in the way, they certainly could not be spared a schoolroom, but the season of the year being what it was, they could live out of doors.

Mademoiselle selected a place in the fir tree wood where we would be undisturbed. To get there we crossed an open sun-baked space full of fruit trees, and we gathered ripening pears and plums into a basket on the way. Then appropriately for Mademoiselle's choice, the flowered golden path plunged into a darkened sunless wood.

A German wood is a very romantic place, full of mystery and a tradition of elves. We were frightened but fascinated. Mademoiselle assured us that robbers hid among the pile of rocks in the further depths, that almost anyone in the wood was someone who wanted to kill. This, not the open country, was her favourite walk—single file tracks in the darkest depths of the forest. I hardly dared to speak lest some lurking robber detected our presence, and once when I looked back and discovered a man following us I exclaimed:

"Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle! *Voilà un homme!*"

And I don't suppose the friendly woodman ever guessed what fear he created by his silent-footed presence.

Every morning we did our lessons in the wood, and this was preceded by a systematic ritual: as soon as we had arrived at the habitual spot, Mademoiselle picked up a stick and hit it against the nearest tree trunk to prove whether it was brittle or not. If it withstood the test she then threw me to the ground holding me up by my heels, and proceeded according to habit. This, she explained, was in order that I should know my lessons.

One morning I lingered over dressing, deliberately meaning to be late. Mademoiselle uttered dire threats of punishment, and started for the woods with Peter. Instead of following them, I hurried to my mother's room; she was in bed, all lace and frills and mauve ribbons, and with a breakfast tray by her side. I explained somewhat incoherently that "she beats me every morning, and I can't . . . I can't bear it!"

"What?" My mother's tone sounded incredulous. She called her maid: "Francine, go and fetch a clean shirt for little Clare. She shall stay with me all day."

Strange sounds of merriment reverberated through the house, and contrasted strangely with the apprehension in my own heart. A regiment was quartered in the vicinity and the officers were billeted upon the seigneurial "schloss" thus contributing towards the entertainment of the house party. With some curiosity I watched the uniformed visitors from the verandah until presently Mademoiselle returned angrily from the wood in search. She discovered me at last and my mother told me to go and wait outside the door because she "had something to say."

I listened to the stormy scene that ensued, wondering whether it meant release at last. Surely Mademoiselle would be dismissed. I saw myself telling Peter the glad news. The end had come at last . . . the end . . . the end. . . .

Suddenly Mademoiselle, flushed and furious, came forth. She led me away. When we reached the boundary of the wood she shook me.

"The next time you tell tales to your mother, I shall KILL you!"

Summer slid into autumn, tree leaves turned colours such as our imagination had not visioned. The house grew quiet, the party dwindled, bugles and drums one early morning proclaimed the departing regiment. Young Captain von der Goltz lifted Peter up, one foot in his stirrup, and carried him towards the gate:

"Tell your mother," he said, "that as we left, the band played 'The girl I left behind me'."

Our day of departure approached. Mademoiselle had to pack, she said, we could go out alone. We could not remember such a thing ever happening before. Hänsel-and-Gretel-like we wandered wonderingly hand in hand, and spoke in whispers. Fairies were everywhere, under every fern, dodging behind rocks, throwing fir cones and red berries at us. We felt ourselves woven into the mystery of the wood. Robbers and violence had vanished. We crawled through arcades of shadow and dense prickly thickets, Peter going first and I following close. These led us into circular clearings, moss carpeted and full of scarlet mushrooms set with pearls. Cobwebs shimmered with diamonds, red squirrels sat up and looked at us, and rabbits with white tails. But Mademoiselle's last words haunted us, even here, as some witch's spell. She said that she would be there although unseen.

"I shall know all you do and say!"

It occurred to us that perhaps the big broad-eared hare that stopped and listened embodied Mademoiselle, it appeared to be spying on us. Perhaps she took on the guise of rabbit and squirrel in turn, the woman was capable of anything! And so we regretfully abandoned the wood and joined the happy band of vintage workers. They gave us mugs of grape juice out of a giant vat. It was sweet to the taste. We laughed with mirth; the men laughed too.

At sunset, on a grassy bank above the vineyard, we watched the colour shapes in the sky: against a vivid glow of crimson there was a purple crocodile. From the valley below arose the song of a peasant returning from work. The beauty of that evening and the thrill of that one day of freedom stirred us unforgettably. We said, "We will remember always."

It was the fourth year of the reign of Mademoiselle, and the scene changed to a black and white timbered Elizabethan house belonging to my father's eldest brother. Our father had been born and brought up here. He hoped that his children would love it as he did.

The garden was full of flowers growing luxuriantly among clipped yews. There was a sunken carp pond full of water-lilies. Cherry trees were trained against the lichened walls, where wild maidenhair fern and snapdragon were rooted in the crannies. There was a mellow sweetness, a scent of briar and sun-baked lavender. A great gnarled wistaria covered the side of the house and encircled the attic windows.

"The children's" bedrooms were in the old wing which was haunted and in need of renovation. No one else occupied this wing; it was at the top of a wide oak staircase, varnished and uncarpeted, that creaked. The walls were lined with ancestors painted on wood panels, those ancestors, that is, who were not deemed worthy to occupy space on the drawing-room walls. At the foot of the stair a Princess from Egypt in her painted coffin case stood sentinel. "The mummy." How my father besought my uncle to send her back whence she came. He attributed all the family misfortunes to that sinister presence which our defunct grand-uncle had brought long ago from Luxor. It was rumoured that, at the time of the mummy's arrival, the coffin case was opened and the interior hygienically fumigated, and that as a result three servants in the house died of an unknown disease! Apart from this, and from the fact that our old county family who then had owned three estates, now owned only one, and were sadly depleted in fortune, it is hard to detect any evidence of curse. The blessings that most men pray for were ours. Sons to every branch of the family were born in plenty and these were healthy and handsome! What more could heart of man demand! My father, however, viewed the mummy in a particular way. He said that she prevented him from making the family's fortune, and a fortune in my father's understanding of the word meant a Rockefeller standard or nothing. Of this Peter and I were ignorant; our belief was simply that the mummy walked the house at night. As soon as darkness fell terror filled our hearts. The sounds of owls under the eaves, emerging from their hiding place at dusk, never were explained to us. We heard their heavy breathing and their footfalls, and the rattle of loose plaster when they moved, to which were added the sounds of rats in a room where an ancestress had been burned to death. Every night I nearly smothered under the bedclothes. Sometimes I was sure I was going mad, gibbering mad like the beggar woman we used to see in Hyde Park.

After a time I was transferred into a small painted dressing-room adjoining the Spanish leather room in which Peter slept with Mademoiselle. His cot was alongside her four-post bed. Although still fearful, at least we could call out to one another. When Mademoiselle put out the light she always expressed a pious wish that the devil might fetch me away in the night and that the mummy might fetch Peter. When she had left us, if sleep did not come quickly to our rescue, I would call softly to Peter, in French now (for we never spoke to each other in any other language): "Dors-tu?" and Peter would repeat the poem he had composed:

"N'aie pas peur,
Petite sœur,
Je te défendrai
Jusqu'à la dernière heure."[1]

When Mademoiselle came to bed, if Peter was awake she would beat his bed with the poker, and Peter quickly drawing up his legs, would squirm about pretending to be hurt. If when she came to bed Peter was asleep, she would pinch his nose to cure him of the snoring habit.

One night Mademoiselle was so angry that she took him and his mattress to an empty attic room.

"You can sleep here," she said, "and as there is an old man living in that cupboard you won't be lonely . . ." and she left him. How we both grew to hate the old house where our father spent his "glorious youth," and to which he and our mother came now only for short week-ends. Once Peter got out of bed without a word and started automatically pulling on his clothes. When Mademoiselle asked him what he was doing it for, he answered: "The mummy has come to fetch me."

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[1] "Be not afraid, little sister, I shall defend you until your last hour."

And it was evident that he was still asleep. He told me the next day that in answer to three knocks on his door he said, "Come in," and that the Egyptian Princess came and stood by his bed.

I used to be shut up, without any clothes on except one garment, in a dreary sloping-roofed musty-smelling room. With growing apprehension I watched the lengthening shadows in the garden, knowing that with the dusk my room would fill with phantoms. If I leapt from the window (and how often I did contemplate it) "they" would be sorry when they found me dead and broken on the pavement below. But there was Peter who couldn't be left all alone; besides, if one has any æsthetic sense, can one commit suicide in one's combinations?

I used to think a great deal about death during those hours when I was left so long alone. I meditated on the fact that death was inevitable. It was a certainty among a crowd of uncertainties. I stroked my arms and pinched the flesh and wondered how it would some day decompose. The idea interested rather than frightened me. I never thought about Heaven or Hell, although Nene had talked so much about the one, and Mademoiselle so much about the other. I did not exactly disbelieve, I more properly disregarded a theory that did not appeal to me. I thought it must be frightfully interesting to be dead, and it fascinated me to think that, if I wished to, in a few seconds I could penetrate the mystery. Upon my own will depended whether I remained or preferred to depart. Death never presented itself to my mind as a finality. I was sure that we went on afterwards, somewhere, somehow, but the idea of going on anywhere without Peter held me back from any decisive action. I must have Peter with me in all things. We must either go together or stay together, and I do not remember ever discussing the alternative with him.

But still it recurred to me over and over that "some day I shall be dead . . . it's going to happen . . . there's no escape . . . I can't go on for ever, I've *got* to die. I wonder what it will be like."

About the fifth year of the reign of Mademoiselle, my uncle, Dick Frewen, was drowned at sea, leaving no children, so his Irish estate fell to us. Innishannon was fifteen miles from Cork on the banks of the river Bandon. The house, a mere square shooting-lodge, was comfortable but plain; it became the centre of new life. Even Mademoiselle found it hard to maintain her domination. She did her best; she kept me in on sunny afternoons, she sent me to bed nearly every day at four or five, she forbade expeditions in the boat or paddling, and when in spite of her I fell in the river up to my neck and was sent home to change, she put me to bed and told me to prepare myself for death. There was only one reason, she said, for my falling into water; God had taken toll of my wickedness at last! I cried and shivered a little, but seeing that God was merciful and did not call me, I regained courage. Mademoiselle avenged herself the next day by throwing broken stones at me on a lonely road.

Her evil wishes had every chance of fulfilment, but that we did not come to any tragic end may prove the special protection of Providence for children. Peter and I, and Hugh, and our cousin Shane Leslie used to go out shooting unaccompanied by parent or keeper. Once, as I leapt a ditch, my gun went off unexpectedly. We killed cormorants and wild duck which abounded on the river bank, and *once* I shot a brace of woodcock. We never had any idea whether we were on our own land or someone else's, and, meeting a man with a gun emerging from a bog, we asked him:

"May one shoot here?"

And he answered:

"Aye, sure you can shoot to yer hearts' content. See! I have a bag full; and the land belongs to Mr. Moreton Frewen!"

Poaching was unsuppressible. Bossie Lane, the king of poachers, brought us our own salmon to buy, but my father adored him because Bossie in their youth had taught him to throw a fly!

Peter by this time was eleven years old, and it was decided that he must go to school! We wept, days before the parting, exchanged gifts, pressed flowers that each had given the other, swore on the Bible never to forget one another, and endured all the sorrow that can possibly be meted to small children. This was a pain of a kind that we had not yet experienced. Mademoiselle was to take him across to England and deposit him at school. She left me in no ignorance of what life would be for me when she got back.

She was absent about a month "on holiday," she wrote, the first holiday in five years. Then my father sent for me, and "broke it to me gently" that she would never return. I don't know why, but I burst into tears and left the room. My mother has ever refuted my reproaches by reminding me "you cried when she went away." Why did I cry? I have always wondered. Perhaps I cried for the same reason that I laughed when they "broke it to me gently" that my grandmother was dead.

IV

On the eve of our inheritance of Innishannon, it happened that my mother had enamoured herself of Brede Place, a fourteenth century ruin on my uncle Edward Frewen's estate in Sussex, and he had allowed her to buy it. We must have been at that time either very prosperous or very imprudent. We had transferred from Aldford Street to a much larger house in Cresman Place; we therefore had three houses, and each in its different way required considerable upkeep. Brede alone could absorb a fortune like a bottomless well. It had been acquired for the sake of its lands by Sir Edward Frewen in 1680. The land was valuable, but to a man whose ancestral home was five miles away the house was useless. It was an age when antiquity counted for nothing. Even the Tudor fireplaces and the oak panelling that shone like varnished tortoiseshell were not deemed worth removing. The family of a gamekeeper inhabited two rainproof rooms; most of the floors and all the window panes had long since ceased to be. Swallows built their nests on the mantelshelves, and the keeper's boy knocked nails into the panelling and festooned chains of starling eggs round the walls. The chapel was a barn, storing grain and straw. By a miracle the Perpendicular east window—exposed to all the sea storms—still stood intact. It was this window which set my mother's heart on ownership and restoration. Her Americanism with all its appreciation of historic tradition spread a full sail; she was determined and undaunted. My father, accustomed in his boyhood to birds'-nests among Brede's rafters, smiled indulgently and was finally persuaded. Some small inadequate renovation was attempted. A floor laid down, a ceiling mended, some window lights adjusted, a door or two rehinged; and before it was the least bit habitable the American novelist, Stephen Crane, frail in body, his days numbered, begged—with a large managing wife—to shelter beneath Brede's eaves. He was, so to speak, bowled over by the sedate grey dignity of this remnant of mediæval England. Like Henry James in his cobblestone street four miles away at Rye, Stephen Crane wrapt himself round in Sussex sea-mist, and the two Americans were assumed to be more "Sussex" even than those who had been bred for generations on its cold clay soil.

It cost Stephen his life. The draughts and the storms that shrieked through the windows rocked the porch-room which he selected as his own. In the wide chimney-place that consumed whole tree trunks the smoke was forced down and back into the room. He was both blown and smoked out. It seemed as if the old house resented human intrusion. Stephen Crane reluctantly abandoned it and went away to Germany to die.

Meanwhile, we were digging ourselves into the complicated vicissitudes of Irish life. In our veins tingled the blood of an Irish grandmother; we absorbed politics with our eggs for breakfast, and accepted everything as a matter of course.

My father, who was a "Home Ruler," entertained enthusiastic ideas for the amelioration of Irish land life. My mother played the rôle of lady of the manor with grace and condescension. Their ardour received scant encouragement: our first Christmas on the estate occasioned a lavish "tree" organized by my mother in the "village school-house." But there were two school-houses! The Catholics, who were in the majority, refused to attend, and thus we learned that for future Christmases there must be two trees.

I recall much discussion concerning the "Castle Farm"—so called because a whitewashed cottage adjoined an ivy-covered tower. The tenant refused to pay his rent, nor could he be evicted, because his wife was certified to be dying. She fed the chickens twice a day. The farm (like most of them) remained uncultivated, the hedges untrimmed, the ditches uncleaned, the gates unmended, in anticipation of the land-valuers' impending visit, upon whose report the taxes for the following year would be fixed. It took some time, however, to kill my father's interest in the people or to crush his English enterprise.

Shane Leslie used to come back from Eton with my brothers and share these holidays, and they would invariably arrive with packing cases full of live stock bought in Eton High Street. A terrier dog, Angora rabbits, lop-eared rabbits, guinea-pigs, fan-tailed pigeons, cooing doves, a grey Persian kitten, love-birds in a cage—such was the Ark that Hugh once arrived with, to the horror of my mother, who hated animals because, she said, they smelt!

But worse than the live animals, she said, were our dead ones. We had instituted a Natural History Museum next to the drawing-room. Sometimes it reeked of naphthaline, but more often it spread a nauseous stink of half-cured skins and uncleaned skulls. We formed a committee of which Hugh was the president, and I was the secretary, Peter the treasurer, and Shane the librarian. We not only sank our own money into the institution, but we handed the hat round among our parents' guests. We had collections of butterflies, beetles and birds' eggs: we stuffed birds and preserved skeletons of all kinds, as well as reptiles and unborn rabbits in bottles.

My father's great hobby in those days was a fish hatchery, his idea being to "stock" the river and make of it the finest fishing in the South of Ireland. A Scots gamekeeper was accordingly installed who understood the science of hatching fish. Into a long shed through raised wood tanks a mountain stream was deviated, which flowed over the rows of fish eggs on trays to the small tanks containing "fry," and thence to the ponds of yearlings, and so into the river. There were salmon as well as rainbow trout spawn. The "rainbow" were an experiment. They gleamed translucently as they crowded to the surface, or leapt into the air when the sieve full of raw minced liver was lowered into the water at feeding time. Every day my father went to look at his fish with almost childish joy.

One night the wooden aqueduct that carried the stream into the fish hatchery was removed, with the result that all the eggs and fry were found dead in the morning. Moreover, the beautiful yearlings in the ponds had been poisoned and were floating belly upwards. Of all the misfortunes that ever descended on my father's head, this was the one perhaps that hurt him most. It was a devilishly wanton act, as senseless as it was cruel. My father had regarded his fish hatchery as a communal benefit. We had our fishing rights, it is true, but the river belonged to all. This manifestation of hostility was very surprising on the part of a people by whom we believed ourselves beloved. Whenever any of us set foot outside our gate we were greeted with, "May the Lord bless yer honour," and "The Holy Saints preserve you and keep you long!" with so many compliments in addition that it was difficult to understand why, as they were so charming to us by day, they cut down our apple trees at night, uprooted our vegetables and turned their cows into the garden to trample on the flowers. (The Scots keeper has since been murdered, and our house is a blackened ruin, and so that finally decides their opinion of us!)

Two years elapsed of joyous freedom, which the transient presence of ever changing governesses did little to spoil. They were all so stupid, so limited in their ideas! They pronounced me frankly "impossible" and would not stay. There was a German, so little and frail, who tried to make me do lessons when Hugh and Peter and Shane were home on holiday. In trying to rescue me from this intolerable situation Hugh drew an arrow from his bow through the door ajar which Fräulein was struggling to close against him. The arrow inadvertently hit her in the eye and broke a blood-vessel; Fraulein spent two weeks in a dark room and I was free! It was decided at last that I must be sent to school, and a decision was made in favour of the Couvent de l'Assomption in Paris.

V

As we passed through London on our way, the atmosphere was heavy laden with war news from Africa. Propaganda was as usual on these occasions doing its best to work up popular patriotism. My mother took me with her to call on

Sir Arthur Sullivan, who was engaged upon setting Kipling's *Absent-Minded Beggar* to music.

"And don't you think . . ." said my mother diffidently, "that the words are rather vulgar?"

To which Sir Arthur laughingly replied:

"And the music is too!"

VI

Two days later the convent doors of Auteuil were bolted behind me, and I was among a crowd of little French girls whose first greeting to the new English girl was, "Vive les Boers! . . . A bas les Anglais!"

The convent was an old château. It had a big garden and a lake with an island on which sat enthroned a large bronze St. Pierre. His bare toes stuck out beyond the pedestal like slabs of chocolate and had to be kissed by everyone on the feast day of St. Peter. A high wall effectively shut out the sights if not the sounds of Paris. Alone the Eiffel Tower looked down upon us from its towering height.

My parents paid extra in order that I should have a room to myself, eat meat on Fridays and have a bath twice a week. These privileges made me a conspicuous heretic. At first I was intolerably homesick and cried every night. Shane and I had sworn at parting that we would write to one another regularly. We had exchanged hair (his was very thick and straight, tied in a bunch that resembled an inferior paint-brush). Winston also had extended an invitation to write to him. I must have let myself "go" to my full resentment against my shut-up-ness, for Winston replied:

"My dear Clare, do not be low-spirited. It is something after all to be fed and clothed and sheltered: more than most people in the world obtain without constant and unwearing toil. Cultivate a philosophical disposition; grow pretty and wise and good. . . ."

I felt rather crushed by this and wondered (and still wonder) how he knew that it was "something to be housed and clothed and fed." He who had never known want. But I appreciated the point, recalling to mind those dreadful starving people who used to gibber at me when I was small and who still haunted me in the dark. I tried to feel thankful for my roof, my food and my most detestable black convent uniform, but I did not venture to write to him again.

Shane was different. He wrote:

"Darling Clare, you see I, true to my contract, am writing to you just as I shall for the next fifty weeks or so until you come back. Not a Sunday will I miss. If I am ill, however bad, I will dictate and have it sent to you. So you may know that only death can be the cause of a non-arrival."

He always urged me to work and to read worth-while things. At fourteen he was raving about *The Pickwick Papers* and about Carlyle's *French Revolution.* My weekly replies I regarded as a sacred commitment, and he assured me that "the happiest half-hour of the week is when I read your delightful letters." Our friendship seems to have been of the most devoted character. At the end of a term when I knew him to be almost on the verge of collapse from overwork, he wrote:

" . . . you said you would excuse me from writing to you during trials. Please don't. I take a pleasure in writing to you, and it doesn't interfere at all with my trials because I begin to work them up early. I have found out from experience that it is the best plan. Most boys only just work it up before the exam, if at all. It is curious to observe the boys you do your trials with. (They mix up the whole school so you may work in a room with boys you have never seen before.) There is the boy with a book learning up to the last moment; he comes out grave; he has overfilled his brain and done badly.

There is the college genius who has no need to look up trials but goes in and passes brilliantly. There is the dunce, anxious-looking, dreading the exam; he comes out sad, he has made a mess of it and may probably fail. There is the fellow who does not care a rap what happens so long as he just scrapes through. There are hundreds of different kinds and I amuse myself observing them. Eton is just a little world and it prepares you for the world outside. All the troubles, cares and joys of after-life are met at Eton, and as these come you feel that the world must be cold and sorrow-bearing, and not made for pleasure. . . ."

My own experience of work, whether with governesses, French or German, or at school, was an intolerable tedium. I could not interest myself in history, which seemed a mere enumeration of dates and wars. I hated my drawing lessons and never could draw a step-ladder in perspective; also I loathed all games and the noise the girls made playing them. There seemed to be only one pleasant interval during the day and that was Chapel. It was a very lovely Chapel. The altar glistened with gold and there were masses of candles which a nun lit one by one with a long taper just before the Angelus. There were also flowers on the altar, real ones; and Mère Clothilde played the organ in the gallery where we sat, whilst the evening sun streamed through the window behind us on to our veiled heads. The singing of the nuns was my idea of Heaven. Throughout the day I looked forward to the moment of the Angelus, and it seemed all too short. I should have liked to spend hours in Chapel. I loved High Mass and the unexpected ritual of Feast days.

There was one day in the year when we all filed by the High Altar and kissed a crucifix inset with a relic of the Holy Cross. This I approached with an emotion that was almost an ecstasy, no shadow of a doubt disturbed my blind, unquestioning belief.

Of these and many other things in my new life I wrote to

Shane. My Mother Superior, a most exquisite person of tradition and breeding, who wore her purple dress and white veil with the dignity of a coronation robe, told me one day:

"I do not know your cousin, but I like his letters. I pray that you and he may some day become good Catholics."

I think she imagined that our marriage, French-like, was pre-arranged. Pre-arranged it certainly was not—nor predestined, but I always believed it was her prayers that made a Catholic of Shane and nearly of me.

It was during one of the holidays that the clergyman of our parish was announced. My mother received him with her usual amiability. The visit happened to concern me. He had called to inform us that the Bishop of Cork was shortly visiting Innishannon to perform the ceremony of confirmation, and should I therefore attend some preliminary classes? My mother assented, and I listened to the arrangements until they were concluded and then observed: "I am not going to be confirmed, I am going to be a Catholic."

My mother first gasped, and then laughed lightly as if to indicate that I was joking. The parson looked all the things he did not say, to the effect, if I could judge, that if my parents chose to send me to be educated in the enemy's camp they must reap the consequences. The interview, at all events, came to an abrupt end.

Afterwards my mother questioned me on the subject, and said:

"It is better to be a Catholic than to be nothing at all, but it will make it very difficult for you to get married in England."

Whether on this account I do not know, but instead of going back to the Convent I was sent to Darmstadt. Hardly could it be described as a school. We were only three. Part of our education consisted in being taken to the opera twice a week, in a tram-car with Shetland shawls round our heads. But the wife of the British Chargé d'Affaires, who was a friend of my mother's, wrote home to say that I was playing ping-pong with German officers. This was true; they were invited to the house to teach us German. My mother sent her German maid to fetch me home.

I was then barely sixteen. All further attempts at education were abandoned. I was sent to Ireland, and left completely to my own devices.

PART TWO

GIRLHOOD AND EDUCATION

I

I COULD SPEAK FRENCH AND GERman but I knew that my father held me in scant esteem because of my educational failure. Shane appreciated in me my love of Nature, but I felt myself so far behind him that I began to be ashamed and to look around for books. There were a good many, but they were of widely differing character. My mother accumulated novels for the guest rooms; they were by Marie Corelli, Sarah Grand, Ouida and Gertrude Atherton, strangely enough all women authors, mostly with a *parti pris* against men.

My father's library was composed chiefly of works on Bimetallism, on Indian currency and on Imperial development. He had a mind that ran on Economics and wrote a book called *The Economic Crisis*, concerning national finance (the title of which was a perfect description of our family's chronic condition). Economics made no appeal, but Auguste Comte on Positivism interested me for a long time until I happened upon Stead's *Letters from Julia.* Stead had been a great friend of my father's, but I doubt if he had ever read these communications from the spirit world, which struck me at once as a most natural phenomenon. I then plunged into A. P. Sinnett's *Growth of the Soul*, and *Esoteric Buddhism.* Sinnett was the president of the Theosophical Society and I had known him ever since I was a child. His white-bearded face had never seemed to change, had never grown older. According to his own account he had no age, he was simply marking time in the material world the while he had work to do. From his book I "remembered," as it seemed to me, many things. Reincarnation was no new theory, it was just a fact that I had always subconsciously known but temporarily forgotten.

My parents were no longer any relation to me but merely the channels through which I had sought re-birth. Peter, I was sure, I had known before, and Shane too, but the rest . . . were strangers. When later Peter came back on leave from the "Britannia" I told him of these things, and he, too, remembered. We understood at last the law of Karma. Our parents were not in any way to blame for our early sufferings, every day of those frightful five years during which we were left to the mercy of "Mademoiselle" were Karma years. Every hour of those days we were paying back Karma, acquitting ourselves of the debt that accompanied our birth. There was no cause for recrimination or regret. That which was written was written and had to be.

Peter returned to the "Britannia," and I pressed Ibsen's *Brand* into his hand at parting. *Brand* had stirred me profoundly and I wanted him to be initiated into everything that meant something to me. I never reflected that the story of a woman who goes mad because she loves her child and is told that she must not grudge it to God, was not likely to appeal to a young man who had just joined the Navy!

Peter was very depressed at leaving Innishannon, the journey was long, cold and tiring. He read *Brand*, and the things he wrote to me on arrival I certainly deserved. *Brand* had served as a pocket iceberg and a travelling sepulchre combined!

My reading did not proceed uninterruptedly. I was still in a very undetermined state. Against the inclination to study was the lure of the open life. A neighbour who owned a hunting stable offered to mount me.

I believe that one is made by circumstances and environment. I might have become a hunting woman by marrying a hunting man. I still recall with pleasure those bright frosty mornings, the cheerful motley Irish crowd mounted on anything from a thoroughbred to a donkey. And those great banks that one set one's horse at so fearlessly. On a drop of sloe gin I was prepared to "take" anything.

More often, however, it was the steed that took me. The horses that were lent to me were perhaps the best that came to the Muskerry meets. I had little control over them, and if I remember right one of them had its tail tied up with red tape. This I took to be a form of decoration, and when we went butting in among the hounds the Master, who was a blood-and-thunder man, shouted to my "owner":

"Can't you keep your woman in order?"

He was that sort of a man, and one had not to be offended.

Almost as much as a good run I enjoyed the weary homecoming in the misty dusks.

My family considered that I was doing "no good" in Ireland. They had no intention whatever of my marrying a country neighbour. I was the only daughter among three sisters, and they entertained quite different projects for me. I must be "given a chance," they said, and so in the spring of the year before I was seventeen they brought me to London.

An economic crisis had obliged us to sell our big house in Chesham Place, and we took instead a small one in Great Cumberland Place. My aunt, Jennie Churchill, had No. 35A opposite, and Leonie Leslie had No. 10. Jennie looked at me in a kind of overhauling way and said I must pull in my waist and put up my hair. I was still growing; so my dresses had to have big turned up hems. It was the fashion for them to touch the ground and for collars to be kept up by whalebones that dug into one's neck. Veils were worn—it was like being in a cage. I was a wild animal being tamed. The taming process outlasted the London season. I was ill-prepared for this "coming out." I knew nobody, and had no girl friends. I had never danced, and apart from the opera in Darmstadt had never been to a theatre. I was shy, apprehensive, lacking in self-confidence and conscious of my lack of education. I tried to please and I tried to feel pleased, but it was not a success. I stood in ball-room doorways longing to be hidden in the crowd, cursing my conspicuous height and shrinking from introductions.

There are certain old waltz tunes that still bring back to me the sensation of walking up a flowered staircase, the babble of voices and the glittering gaiety that accentuated my sense of isolation. Whenever at ten o'clock at night I had to dress for a ball, my nightie lying alongside my gala dress seemed to bid me make my choice, and I longed to go to bed. There was a reason, however, for conforming to the situation. Much as I hated "going out," I was impelled by the hope of meeting one special person.

I had made my début at a fancy dress ball given by Mrs. Adair for her niece Nelly Post. In flowing green with crowns of shamrocks Nelly and I danced in an Irish quadrille. The rehearsals took place several times before the ball, and at the last of these a young man arrived rather late (delayed at his office in the City) and was introduced to me as Wilfred Sheridan. I was told that he was my real partner and would replace the one who had been rehearsing with me. From the moment that I met him he absorbed my attention. Nobody else had any attraction for me. Wilfred was beautiful and cultured. He regarded me as an unsophisticated young creature, but he, too, was young. Almost his first question was whether I had read his ancestor's works, to which I replied:

"I thought he made furniture."

"That was Sheraton, not Sheridan," he corrected; but I had never heard of Sheridan!

He did not care to dance, and so we always made for the farthest sitting-out room or for the back stairs where we could talk undisturbed. My aunts, when I had disappeared, would search for me, lead me back to the crowded doorways, introduce new partners to me and forbid me to sit out. I was "wasting my time," they said, and making a fool of myself. Foolish I certainly was, beyond all control. On one occasion, hearing that Wilfred was to be Viola Tree's partner at a cotillon, I rushed up to her and said:

"But he's mine . . . you can't have him!"

Viola, who did not care in the least whether she danced with him or another, shrugged her shoulders and said:

"You can have him."

Wilfred, furious, sat next to me but gave all his cotillon favours to Viola, and I went home in tears.

In his more serious moods he undertook my education. I must read, he said, *The School for Scandal*, and his grandfather Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, in twenty volumes which he would lend me one by one! Had I not read Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, or Stevenson's *Virginibus Puerisque?* Nor must I omit a course of Jane Austen and George Eliot. Above all Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles.*

Whilst Wilfred was thus engaged upon one side of my education, my aunt Jennie Churchill was intent upon another. She became my second mother. I had to go and see her every morning and read *The Times* leaders to her while she breakfasted. After that I had to practise how to do my hair, for I did it, she said, abominably. Above all I must try to talk and learn to smile and not look bored when anyone was introduced.

"Remember that you are not invited for your own amusement, but to contribute to the party."

The necessity of marrying was perpetually urged upon me. My family were very hard up and I knew the effort it was to provide me with the necessary clothes. Nor was it done, as I knew very well, for my amusement. My father regarded me as an investment. If I married *well* I should have proved myself worth while. My infatuation for Wilfred was deplored. He had £500 a year, and at that time no prospects. £500 a year! How did I know whether two people could or could not live on it? I knew nothing about money; I was only quite sure that I could live on anything or nothing with the man I loved. My sentiments were scoffed at, and I was forbidden to see him.

The fact was that not only I cared for Wilfred, but I was paralysed by the general attitude of society towards elder sons. I could not bring myself, however charming they might be (and who shall say that elder sons cannot be charming?) to talk to them without self-consciousness. There were at that time several conspicuous *partis* as people called them, and I could not get rid of the sensation that they knew that I was poor and that I knew they were marriageably desirable. I could not bear that they should think, or that anyone looking on should think, that I made the slightest effort to be unduly amiable. Rather than be suspected of such an attitude I was absurdly rude. If by any chance I did happen in spite of everything to get on rather well with such an one, I was irritated by the approval of my relations and by their effort to invite us together again—their swiftly rising hopes, and intense interest in the sequel. My grotesque pride and resentment never would have arisen if, from the earliest age, marriage had not been represented as the aim of existence. Marriage ought not to be a goal, at least not a goal in sight. It ought to be a hidden pit into which one falls unwarily.

Had my artistic talents been discovered and encouraged I would have lived more outside myself, have lost sight of the marriage idea, and been more loved because I was more happy, and therefore more attractive.

Marriage at all events was out of the question. The man I had selected was not a marrying man. The family were very disappointed. I was sent, half in disgrace, back to Ireland in August, there to continue the reading of the books that Wilfred sent me. I began also to write, hoping eventually to earn my independence. The result of long hours of work was a novel called *L'Ingénue*, which proved, however, that the author was more ingenuous than the heroine. I also wrote a completely worthless volume of essays, worthless because my opinions were too immature. In an essay on "Happiness"—of which I knew nothing—I seem to have had a strange subconscious premonition, for I attributed real felicity to the state of widowhood, in the case of one young enough to reconstruct her freedom, and the satisfy-ing of the maternal complex by two children, one of each sex!

When winter came I was offered a "second chance" in the guise of a Dublin season, to retrieve my London failure.

II

I have never been unwilling to give Royalty its due. There is something pleasantly mediæval in the authority of the head of a clan, of a tribe or of a state, but minor royalties have always seemed to me rather pathetic. Lord Dudley masquerading as the King, by royal sanction, provoked my sense of the ridiculous. No royalties were ever quite as royal. *Aides-de-camp* pervaded the Castle, upholding what they regarded as a Royal standard. They supervised the entertainment of the guests by day, but at night the real show began. The guests, all in their best and brightest, assembled among the banks of flowers in the state rooms. At the appointed hour the double doors were opened wide and "Their Excellencies" were greeted by their London friends with curtsies that would have propitiated the heart of a king. Lady Dudley, in a crown-shaped tiara, and pages holding up her train, enhanced her husband's splendid entrance. Every night we sat down to a banquet, band accompanied, and when it was over and the ladies left the hall, each paused at the door to perform another curtsy. It was the seriousness of the performance that struck me as comic. To those same people across the water the Dudleys would have had no importance, but in Ireland their English friends combined together to preserve the farce. And what a good farce it was for them, and so expensive—and the country paid! There was a most undesirable gulf between the English friends and the Irish guests. The English held aloof, laughed at the Irish, and said they were provincial bores. One must suppose that "the Castle" entertainments served some useful purpose to the Irish, but whatever that purpose was, it remained well hidden.

Amid the glamour of trumpets and royal regalia in this make-believe court, those for whom intellectuality was a pose crowded around the author of a suddenly successful book called *The Unaddressed Letters.* Sir Frank Swettenham had just arrived from the governorship of the Malay States, and his "letters" were full of Eastern colour, fantastic and exotic. Almost did the pages exhale tuberose. So beautiful were they and so real, that everyone was engaged in conjecturing to whom they had been addressed. There were incredible *on-dits,* and his presence only heightened the mystery. To any questioning he adopted the Oriental method of indirect reply. He had a parchment-coloured face, Chinese eyes, and a habit of talking in metaphors. Naturally he did not dance; he took dowagers down to supper, and sat out a great deal with me. I never understood what he was saying, and he did not mean me to understand. He gave an impression of unfathomable depths. Only once did he ever say anything intelligible, and that was to the effect that every day he lived he learnt something new, and therefore living was worth while. This sentiment surprised me, for he certainly looked as if he knew everything there was to know. Sir Frank was the first of my many intellectual friendships and it is still brought up against me in the family, all humorously, that in my rosebud youth I used to sit out half the night with that parchment-faced ex-governor!

Leonie Leslie was godmothering me at the time. She was more tolerant than Jennie, a strange mixture of the worldly and the philosophical. In public she was witty and brilliant. Alone with me she was almost a sage disguised; she gave me "direction" and saved me from drifting along the path of doubt and cynicism. Her advice was profound. I thought she might have been a very great woman had she had the chance or had she trusted herself. But the world had either buffeted her too much, or perhaps not enough. She had led a strangely repressed life, but she was too proud to resent it and had too much humour for self-pity. She hid behind her wit as completely as any Oriental woman behind her yashmak. Few people have known the face of Leonie, and Providence even dimmed her eyes, so that they should not reveal the intensity of her soul; but Shane, her son, is a little bit of her incarnate, and when he reveals himself he lays bare her heart to the glaring world. All that Leonie ever suffered, hoped to be or longed for, was crystallized in Shane. Whatever she might have been Shane has been, although he does not and never could realize it.

When our "Castle" visit ended, Leonie took me with her to stay at the Royal Hospital. This was the Castle's great rival, where the Connaughts entertained more amusingly and less royally. The Duke was Inspector-General of the Forces in Ireland, and the two Princesses, Margaret and Patricia, were the pivots of conjectural discussion. They seemed so obviously predestined to thrones. Indeed, kings and heirs of kings were already on the horizon. Rumour was rife. Margaret, the elder, who would have been beautiful if she had not had Patricia for a sister, was the dominating factor of that household. She had poise, and charm, she organized, supervised and influenced. Patricia had just "come out." It was said of her that she was the most beautiful princess in Europe. Tall, fair, oval-faced, with eyelashes the birds could build their nests in. Apart from painting flowers in water-colours she would sit absent-mindedly, neither speaking nor seeming to hear, and yet looking intense.

However much one may like some royalties individually, there is something unspeakably tedious in the endless standing about, the "what-will-happen-next" expectant atmosphere that they create. How one stands! They make it impossible to settle down to a book or to any consecutive conversation. Anybody to whom one tries to talk in a royal atmosphere is distant and jumpy and keeps an eye fixed on the royal movements, alert and eager to be noticed. Even the most intelligent and habitually charming people cease to be themselves in the presence of royalty. Surprisingly many are reduced to a standard of idiocy. Royalties have their jokes and silly stories that outsiders, standing first on one leg and then on the other, have to listen to and appear to be amused by. There is nothing more deadly than to have to appear amused. The smile that must be preserved and the banal response that accompanies it. People listened to Prince Arthur's interminable jokes and laughed at them, and told him he was most amusing, which merely encouraged him to go on. He had not in those days learnt to mimic foreign royalties and Orientals, which he does now so brilliantly. I have often wondered what impression royalties have of us, who think they know us, but see us only in an idiotic guise.

III

The next summer we all met again. No party was considered complete without the "Connaught Princesses." I confess that I became extremely devoted to Margaret; she stood out from the rest as shining crystal among quartz. It was said of her that she had the character of Queen Victoria. However that may be, I do not know, but she was both woman of the world and naïve, saintly yet a naughty laughing child, democratic yet aristocratic, a real paradox. Above all she was extraordinarily human; she seemed to understand things that never could come into her life. Perhaps the real explanation is that she was an artist. Although Patricia got all the credit, Margaret was more of an artist in her soul; she had the sixth sense, which only artists have. The summer produced no changes or events of interest. Patricia turned her head sulkily away from anyone who might have been regarded as suitable. The heirs of thrones being necessarily foreigners, she affected to despise them in perfectly good English fashion.

It was the winter of 1904-5 that the Connaughts went to Egypt, and Margaret and I promised that we would write to one another regularly. At the same time my mother and I started for Malta. Peter was then a midshipman in Lord Charles Beresford's flagship, and we had a good many friends in the Mediterranean Fleet. Hedworth Lambton was a Rear-Admiral and George Warrender in command of the "Highflyer"; Osmond de Beauvoir Brock was Lord Charles's Flag-Captain, and Sturdee his Chief of Staff. These combined elements were sufficient for the entertainment of Malta. I danced every night with admirals and midshipmen, and for the first time I began to love dancing. Every naval officer I met was good-looking and charming. It was a world of men; of course I had a marvellous time. The only inharmonious personality was Captain O. de B. Brock, who affected to dislike women and cultivated an abrupt manner which lent him originality. Once when he criticized my beloved Peter to me I said:

"I'm afraid you don't like boys."

And he answered acidly, "No, and I don't like girls either!"

When he called upon us at our hotel he explained, lest we might think he had suddenly become amiable, that it was raining when he passed by and he had no umbrella.

Malta itself delighted me, its hard silhouette, the few solitary palms, gardens full of orange-laden trees, and the vivid Oriental sunsets. At Malta I became suddenly young out of sheer lightheartedness, but my Malta fun was shortlived.

Early one morning, in one of the worst storms that ever flayed the Mediterranean, the Fleet raised anchor and steamed away. The decision had been taken overnight. Malta, looking on, wondered why. The truth was that Lord Charles had once more lost his heart, and had threatened that if the object of his affections would not respond, he would put out to sea. And so he did!

Malta without its Fleet was like a peacock without its tail. The island ceased to have any *raison d'être*. We left by the first steamer that called. The winter, however, was not over. What should we do next? How fill in the time till April? The steamboat disembarked us at Marseilles. We decided to go to Cannes. At the station *guichet* my mother turned to me helplessly and said:

"I've no money ——"

She had not lost it; she simply had spent the last bob without apparently realizing it.

Providence has so often come to my rescue in times of crisis that I cease ever to wonder what would have happened if —— On this occasion I had a precious five pound note stored up that Jack Churchill had given me for Christmas. It paid our way to Cannes and at the Grand Hotel we took a double room and awaited the arrival of funds from England. The mimosa trees were in full bloom. The sunshine glittered and danced reflectingly in the bay, and the white-sailed yachts like birds with outspread wings raced one another.

Socially, however, it was deadly. Full of Grand Dukes and Pagets playing golf. If London could be taken and flung into a basin, and the lighter elements that floated were skimmed, that would be Cannes. I spent most of my time with Lelia Paget, the daughter of General Sir Arthur and the famous American Minnie. Lelia was an interesting offshoot of these amazing two and I had temporarily a cult for her. I was in danger of having a religious vocation. Lelia was saintly and had the face of a great tragédienne. She was living with her father in their villa at Le Cannet and I used to take the tram and spend most of my days with her in narcissus-carpeted olive groves. But a trouble weighed heavily upon me and I confided it to Lelia. The trouble was, as usual, financial. No money came from England! Some hitch in the arrangements made by my father before he sailed for America left us stranded. My mother wept. We did not know how to stay on nor how to leave. For a time we tried not to eat, depending for our food upon our invitations. One day when we were not asked, I recall the void in my inside as we walked up a hill to call on someone in a villa at the top. On arrival we found, as we expected, a magnificent tea laid out with cakes, tempting even to one who was not hungry, and it was very difficult not to eat like a savage!

Not being initiated into the tangled complications of my parents' money affairs, I had not the slightest idea how long we might remain in this predicament or what could happen to alleviate it. I tried to comfort my mother, but I was dreadfully depressed in my own heart. Lelia told all this to her uncle; and he, an old friend of my father's, old enough (he said) to be my father, took me for a walk on a wild hillside and forced fifty pounds upon me! He did it, I must say, in the nicest possible way, but I had been taught to believe that one should never accept presents from men, except books. I refused it resolutely, but as we sat among the juniper bushes he pulled off my buckled slipper and stuffed the note into the toe. There was nothing to do but to limp home with it. I could not immediately make up my mind whether to tell my mother or not, it seemed impossible to spend such a sum without her knowing. Besides, it had been given to me for our mutual aid. Her attitude in such a matter, I could not gauge. But as the very next morning I found her sobbing with her face in her hands I put my arms round her and broke it to her gently. It made her stop crying while she asked a string of questions, after which she sobbed on my neck:

"Oh, my poor child! My poor, poor child!"

Then pulling herself together with an effort she suggested that we should go to Monte Carlo "just for the day, darling," and "have a little fling."

I had never been to Monte Carlo and was curious to know what it was like. I insisted, however, that we should pay our hotel bill up to date before we left.

At the Casino door an official asked if I were twenty-one. My mother flashed angry eyes upon him.

"Of course not!"

Entrance was refused me and it required all my mother's tact and persuasion to explain away her mistake. In the end the official smiled a Frenchman's smile and let me pass. With beginners' luck I played and won. How much I staked I cannot remember, but I won some twenty-five pounds, and my mother suggested that as the Fleet was due in two days at Genoa we should go and meet it. And we did.

IV

Princess Margaret meanwhile had been writing to me regularly from Egypt describing the various phases of the winter. At first her letters contained mere descriptions of the things which impressed her most. The moonlight rides to the Pyramids and so on. But gradually they evolved a more personal note. The moonlight rides began to include someone else. Finally she lost her heart and suffered torments of anxiety, uncertainty and longing. The whole thing arose out of an accident. Young Prince Gustaf Adolf of Sweden who happened also to be in the vicinity of the Pyramids, had been invited to dine, and was instructed to take Princess Patricia in to dinner. As he knew neither of them and was too shy to ask which was which, he offered his arm to the one who attracted him most. It happened to be the wrong one, but the result was definite. The mistake wove them into their destined paths. Ensued more moonlight rides. Finally, at a ball given in honour of the Connaughts by the Khedive, Prince Gustaf proposed to Margaret and kissed her on the balcony. The next letter was a rhapsody:

"Tell my friends—I want them all to know, this is not a 'mariage arrangé,' *we are in love!*"

On the way home, they stopped at Capri to see the Queen of Sweden, whose health necessitated wintering on the island under the supervision of her doctor, the famous Axel Munthe —of whom more later.

The following June (1905) they were married. The ceremony took place at Windsor Castle. Never shall I forget that early morning at Paddington Station, the guests in evening dress awaiting the "special" that was to convey them. It was like "the morning of the day after," when daylight overtakes the jaded revellers. The effect of morning sunlight on the faces of some people whom hitherto one had only seen by artificial light was revealing in the extreme. In particular a certain Duchess who was rumoured enamelled, wherefore she never would be able to smile again. The pigments on her face were so crudely combined that she was fascinatingly frightful.

Leonie Leslie "chaperoned" a "queue" of girls. My dress, which was of two shades of pink, like the petals of a La France rose, was designed for the occasion by Monsieur Jean Worth. He remembered having made my mother's dress for her début at imperial Compiègne.

We waited a long time in Windsor Chapel listening to the music. When the bride arrived she was as white as alabaster, and covered in a lace veil presented to her by the "ladies of Ireland." It was woven with lilies and M's at the four corners. Princess Patsy, in floods of tears, was a bridesmaid and Princess Ena of Battenberg (now Queen of Spain) and Princess Beatrice of Saxe Coburg, and little Princess Mary, all wearing crowns of daisies. The bridal couple can hardly be described. Margaret had found the only man in the world as saintly as herself. They were almost transcendental in their purity and happiness. They were to me a matter of great envy. I, who had found myself obliged to stifle my love for Wilfred, and had thereby grown as nearly cynical and disbelieving as one can when one is young and disillusioned, realized through their happiness that dreams can come true. I hoped that some day . . . and Princess Margaret whispered to me at parting that she hoped too, that I . . . for she knew what was in my heart.

V

After the first child of many to be, was born, Nelly Post (at whose ball I made my début) and I were invited together to spend a Stockholm winter. We did the journey together, which seemed at the time a great adventure. We were met by a royal A.D.C. at Malmö harbour on landing and by Prince Gustaf at the Stockholm station on arrival. The royal waiting-room opened for us, and a large closed car was surrounded by people who bowed and curtsied.

We found ourselves in a fairy-like town, covered with snow, where the sound of ice-breakers ploughing their passage through the frozen canals mingled with the sleigh bells of the muffled street traffic. In a great quadrangular palace King Oscar was eking out the end of his life. In a corner of this palace Gustaf and Margaret had their apartments.

During the ensuing weeks life was a mixture of court functions and snow sports. No one was more impatient of pomp and etiquette than Princess Margaret, but because she was anxious that her first English visitors should make a good impression, she made us leave twenty-six cards on court officials! With the result that we were invited to ministerial dinners and so on. The things which might have been intolerably dull were amusing because they were strange, but if there were dull moments they were illumined by Princess Margaret's sense of humour, for she saw the comic in everything! My love for her would have tolerated anything that she exacted. She had a peculiar quality that inspired devotion. Prince Gustaf was her spiritual slave. He thought that everything she did and said was right, and in fact it was so! The people, too, all adored her; one could read it in their faces. Her drives through the town resembled triumphal progresses. She was innately democratic, and that was what the Swedes appreciated.

Whenever we went for expeditions in the country we returned on a small local railway in a crowded compartment, and she always resolutely refused the offer of a reserved compartment.

This rubbing of shoulders with "the common people" distressed her little prim lady-in-waiting almost to tears. The preoccupation of her royal person by her suite moved her to more extreme disregard of tradition than might otherwise have been the case. For instance, when the Controller of the Household insisted upon knowing on one occasion whether the motor or the carriage should be ordered for the evening, she answered that she could not be bothered with such trivial details. The Controller was persistent; it was his right to know, he was there for that purpose. He saw that his Princess was irritated, but so was he; it made a difference, he said, as to the cockades the footmen wore on their hats. Being hard pressed she decided in favour of the motor, but there was a gleam in her eye which denoted a sequel. We drove to the party in the cockaded motor, but when it was time to leave she decided mischievously in favour of the suite's carriage. The footmen looked as if they believed this was the end of the dynasty. Prince Gustaf, however, smilingly acquiesced; there was nothing more to say. We all bundled into the landau which shook and rattled and was held up at crossings, whilst the others in the car with the royal cockades flashed royally by through the suspended traffic, and were saluted by the Castle guard with bugles and drums on their arrival.

Princess Margaret meant not to be custom bound. It was her ambition, "some day" to lure artists and littérateurs around her. But meanwhile King Oscar and his Queen were very old and the absurdest conventions were jealously preserved by a narrow officialdom. Although the advent of an English princess had begun the breaking-down process, Margaret was too new to the country, and too absorbed in child-bearing to be able to accelerate the process. She and Gustaf adored each other so that one felt sorry for them that they could not be left more to themselves. It may have been that year or later, she assured me she was quite indifferent as to whether she ever became a Queen or not. In fact, she would welcome being "let off" the responsibility, and could imagine nothing happier than to be allowed to retire to one of the thousand and one lovely islands and live undisturbed with her Gustaf to herself. She loved the country, and our happiest pastime was to drive far out into wild ethereal places where the snow was broken only by elk tracks, and the silence by our sleigh bells.

Her favourite visit was to Prince Eugen. His house stood on a height above the harbour, and a great bronze replica of Rodin's *Penseur* looked out across the water. The poetry of the northern half-lights and of snow shapes and shadows was in his work. He lived like a hermit, dedicating his life to art and repelling any other form of duty. His house was almost of glass, so big were the windows, catching all the sun and contrasting the brilliant forced flowers within against the white snow without.

As daylight faded one recognized the scenes of his pictures, and the queer blue luminous light that characterized them. While he talked his eyes always scanned the "beyond" and he seemed to be far more absorbed in the beauty of the view than interested in any conversation. He would break off in the middle of a sentence to point out a little white steamer with its yellow reflected lights. We would linger until the cupola of the Russian church was a mere silhouette, and the pale pink sky had faded into indigo. The town across the water lighted its myriad lights, and the factory on the opposite shore with its great chimney looked like all the pictures of it by Prince Eugen, whose interpretation transformed it almost into a national monument.

From this atmosphere we would have to drag ourselves away in order to hurry and dress to attend an official dinner.

One day Nelly and I set out alone to explore the Castle. We drifted through uninhabited apartments and eventually fetched up in the King's, which was unguarded, and full of beautiful tapestries. Suddenly, five rooms away (they all gave into each other like a gallery) the King appeared. We tried to hide in the dining-room, but a servant brought word that His Majesty wished to speak with us. He had been very ill (these were indeed his last days) and he had to be wheeled in an invalid chair. He abandoned this outside the door of the room in which we waited, and he made a great effort, with the help of a stick, to walk towards us with a firm step. He was very tall and very straight, extremely handsome, obviously disliked his infirmity and was vain of his one-time fine physique. We apologized for our intrusion and he held our hands in turn in both of his, and bade us welcome in perfect English.

He was so charming, it seemed a pity one had not known him a few years earlier. A man not only of great charm but of great culture. His poems, in French, fill a volume. He was a great statesman too, for it was due to his efforts that the separation between Norway and Sweden was accomplished without bloodshed. The nation saw red in the heat of the moment and wanted war, and because he would not consent his popularity declined and never recovered.

The Minister for the Navy, who took me in to dinner one night at the Prime Minister's, talked to me indignantly of the peaceful separation. People desired war, he said, and they would have war sooner or later. Norway he described as a rude ill-mannered neighbour, too close for peace' sake. It seemed to me incredible that anyone should dare to be bitter because of peace! And as for King Oscar, the Pacifist, God rest his soul!

VI

Brede Place was now home (instead of Innishannon, where the tenants were hostile). Brede was more accessible and had more to offer than Innishannon; it supplied the same beauty of nature though of a different kind. Its outdoor life was as varied and alluring, added to this the joy of its ancient history, and the intellectual environment that surrounded it. One could live months at Brede and never grow mentally rusty. South Sussex seemed to have become a kind of rest place for thinkers, a refuge for writers, a work spot for painters.

Four miles away, at Rye, Henry James inhabited a Queen Anne house in a quiet cobble-stone street. He gave me the privilege of disturbing his solitude whenever I liked. To get at Henry James's mind required time, and here we had it in plenty. I used to bicycle over from Brede to lunch with him, and linger far into the afternoon; or coming down by train from London he would meet me at the station, take me to Lamb House, give me food and philosophy and send me home. The only time I ever found him absent he wrote in reply to my complaint:

"My dear Clare,

Your note has followed me. I am touched and horrified at your having had to resort to the musty 'Mermaid' inn for slaking thirst and repose of body. I should have been so delighted to put you up indefinitely had I only been where I had so much best have been. I didn't mean to do it—to be away—and will almost never do it again. And this is a very tiny absence. I return to-night for indefinite fidelity, or rather (for that is vilely put) for the most definite possible. . . . Make me another early sign, follow it up close."

Once, when we had been in London together, he came to see me off at the station on my return to Brede. I had arranged to travel with Perceval Landon, who had just returned from Lhassa and who was on his way to the Kiplings, whose station was the one before ours. "Uncle" Henry was much concerned. He said:

"If you would rather not travel with that man, I will have you locked in a compartment by yourself."

I had considerable difficulty in persuading him that I wanted tremendously to travel "with that man." He was very protective in the old-fashioned sense. I begged him often to introduce me to his "dear friend Wells."

But he produced a maze of explanations to justify his refusal.

In his own house one met a varied assortment of intellectuals, but he was at his best, and I was happiest, when we were alone. I meant to learn all I could from him, and metaphorically I sat at his feet in a mental attitude of adoration and humility. But he considered that he, too, could gain from me a new perspective through my modern vision. Ever so tenderly and gently I felt that he was dissecting me as a specimen. His unending question was always: What are you doing and what do you think about it? Particularly *what did I think about it?*

I wanted to know what *he* thought about it, but he encircled his conclusions in a maze, and when finally he reached his objective I was completely lost, and it required all my wits to disentangle his meaning.

These visits, even if they left one bewildered, were stimulating. Everyone else seemed mentally pale in comparison. In the same way his novels, which I never read for the story's sake but for the style only, made the other and more intelligible novels seem cheap and mediocre. Few personalities have impressed me to the same extent.

Rudyard Kipling, for instance, our neighbour fifteen miles in the opposite direction, a jolly little man with a schoolboy humour, would not have seemed anything much if his eyebrows had been shaved and one had not known his name. I am sure that celibacy is the proper state for writers and thinkers as much as for priests. Henry James was superior by virtue of his celibacy. When he had a good story to tell, Mrs. Kipling always intervened to tell it better. If Rudyard Kipling were called Jones, a very charming cheery Mr. Jones he would be, but Henry James called Jones could only have been THE Mr. Jones, the GREAT Mr. Jones, the ONLY Jones.

Mrs. W. K. Clifford once took me with her to a luncheon given by Mrs. Humphry Ward at her club. It consisted purely of shining lights; I knew no one and was not known. Nobody spoke to me. After lunch the door opened and Henry James was announced. It was as though one had announced the King. The whole party rose simultaneously to its feet, and Uncle Henry, advancing towards them and espying me, opened his arms in greeting and "folded me in an all-tender embrace." The women looked at me wonderingly and asked Mrs. Clifford who I was.

My only other girl friend besides Princess Margaret was Mrs. Clifford's daughter Ethel. As a poet she was already achieving success and promised a brilliant future. She was beautiful, of a Burne-Jones type. She had the most exquisite imagination: Barrie, Maeterlinck, James Stephens, Yeats and Rossetti, stewed in a pot, seasoned with herbs and scented with jonquils—that was the essence of Ethel's mind. Her love of Nature and her affinity with woods led one to suspect that she was in reality a dryad. A dryad who fell in love with mortal man and lost her soul to marry him.

Up to the time of her marriage all her friends were writers and artists. In their home one met most of the people one had ever heard of. These doors opened up a new world for me. Ethel treated me indulgently and did not laugh at my literary aspirations. I appreciated her and spent days alone with her, revelling in her mind as in a garden of flowers, filled with sounds of fountain and flute.

But it is a terrible thing when one's friends take unto themselves husbands. It removes them to another planet. Temporarily Ethel was removed; she became unintelligible; she was making a son. I could not, at that time, follow the intricate working of her mind, nor the deep emotional reaction that filled her soul like cathedral music. Some time later I caught up with her.

It was about this time that my first article appeared in the *National Review*. Leo Maxse had suggested to Violet Asquith to write something on country house visiting, or on modern entertainment from a critical point of view, promising to keep the authorship strictly anonymous. Violet Asquith did not want to do it and handed on the suggestion. The theme appealed to me; I set to work, with a dare-devil spirit, to describe as insolently as possible all the kinds of houses I had stayed in, each with its type of hosts and guests. People recognized themselves, and recognized each other. Considerable comment was aroused. Some were flattered and others furious. Everyone wanted to know who had written it. A few said it was Maurice Baring. The truth leaked out. There ensued an angry *volte-face* on the part of those who had attributed it to Maurice Baring. They didn't any longer think it was well written. They said: "She has done for herself!" and "She will never be asked anywhere again." But I had earned my first ten pounds, and Leo Maxse had written to me that William Meredith, partner in Constable & Co., was interested in the author, to the extent of wishing to see me. I called at Constable's and was received by the handsome young white-haired son of George Meredith, who asked me to write a book. An American publisher would have mapped out a direction, and pointed out the material, but A BOOK was too vague.

I perceived that I was being offered the realization of my dreams, but I was hopelessly at sea. I wrote a novel and showed it to some friends. Letters from George Moore, Frank Swettenham, Robert Hichens, Ashmead Bartlett and A. E. W. Mason reveal the astounding trouble they took to criticize my naïve effusions, with the result, however, that the work never found its way to Mr. Meredith! George Moore, I think it was, who killed it, although he never meant to; in fact, he got quite cross because I would not re-write as he advised. He little knew how utterly the quality of his praise had crushed me. It was from Seaford House on June 29th, 1907, that he wrote:

> " . . . It was with difficulty that I restrained myself this afternoon from writing to you that I had read a third of your book and liked it so much that I had to tell you before reading any further. The phrases that rose in my mind were: 'What a dear little book she has written and what a charming girl she must be to have thought so well, so truly and so prettily.

. . .' 'There are just a few points to correct and if she were staying in the same house with me it would be a pleasure to revise her book with her; a few touches here and there, deftly done—for it would be a thousand pities to do anything that would change the petal-like flutter of her pages, scented with all the perfume of her young mind.' 'A real young girl's book.'

"These sentences reflect the thoughts that your book inspired fairly well. It was not until you entered on your story that I began to get critical. To tell a story truthfully and to tell it nobly would seem to be one of the most difficult things to do. Everybody fails except Tourgeneff; that is my opinion or very nearly, so you must not be cast down if I tell you that your story needs mending. In the course of a long conversation I might be able to throw some light on the intricate question of narrative, and might perhaps suggest how your story be made more true, more significant of human nature. And the time would be well spent, for your writing flowers out of a mind that thinks and feels clearly and beautifully."

I could not bear that my book should be called "a dear little book." I could not bear to be a charming girl "who thinks prettily." And then the humiliating summing up "a real young girl's book"! I realized in that one sentence the hopeless limitation of my experience and knowledge of life. I resented it, I grew more than ever dissatisfied with the sheltered shamness of my surroundings. I flung the manuscript across the room, danced on it, kicked it, and put a match to it!

I then wrote to him that somebody had told me that my story was not original; it had been written before. He answered me from 4 Upper Ely Place, Dublin:

"I beg you not to listen to idle advice. Of course somebody has written a book with the same plot as the charming story which you sent and which I rearranged for you, linking it here and there, leaving you of course to carry out those few suggestions in your own happy youthful unconscious style.

"All plots resemble one another—all faces have eyes and noses. Books are silly, and wise, ugly and beautiful, by the way they are written and not by the plots. How fond people are of talking of things they know nothing about. The things I hear said about painting and literature. Write your book on the lines agreed upon and you will, I promise you, write a charming book. Close your ears to vain talk about similarity of plots. *The story would be good enough for me if my hands were not full and you wished me to write it.*"

I thanked him for his encouragement and expressed my surprise at his interest, to which he replied:

"Why do you think it strange I should take an interest in you? In whom and what should I take an interest if I didn't take an interest in a young girl on the threshold of life, who certainly has a great deal of charm?"

His being interested in "a young girl on the threshold of life" (damn it!) was precisely what surprised me. I hated myself more and more for appearing in that guise.

Shortly afterwards he sent me *The Lake*, for which, thanking him rather late, I apologized and explained that as I had not time to read it in London I had taken it to the country, and that in fact I planned to read it in the garden. His reply on the subject still vividly comes to my mind whenever I see anyone trying to read out of doors!

"I knew quite well you could not read the book in London and I guessed that you would write to me from Brede Place, Sussex. But you speak of reading in the open air? That I could never do. I often hear of books to put in one's pocket, to read at the end of a long walk, in a mountain cave or mid the heather—I have read books suitable to a hammock but not only do I never read a book in the open air, but I never saw anybody reading in the open air. Do tell me if you ever read a book through in the open air. I have heard of pictures painted in the open air, I have even seen them, they are horrid, so horrid that I'm doubtful about everything done in the open air. . . .

"The end of The Lake is the best part, I think, and there is a drive round the lake which didn't seem altogether bad when one remembers the uniform badness of English fiction. Have you yet read a story by Tourgeneff? Don't forget to let me know when you come to Dublin, I shall be here for months and months writing—always writing."

We got to know each other well by meeting at Stafford House. The Duchess of Sutherland's weekly party was, in every sense of the word, "a salon" and there I made a great many friends I might never otherwise have met. These parties were most delightful; no one was invited who did not qualify intellectually or through some talent. The purely "smart" were debarred. The house (now the London Museum) was a perfect setting and Duchess Milly the perfect hostess. Her natural charm and Bohemianism of spirit cemented the widely-differing personalities into collective harmony. One retains a vision of her in glistening silver and glittering diamonds, looking very pale and fair against the background of gold and crimson and lilies. All the poets, all the artists, and the rest were at her feet. Her radiancy simply took them by storm. She remains an exquisite figure in a brilliant social world that has passed away.

Among the friends I made at Stafford House was Robert Hichens, who lived abroad and came to England only during the summer. He was for me a window through which I looked out on to the desert, and on to the Sicilian Mountains, and the Egyptian Nile. He mirrored the sunshine and the warmth of the places in his books. I loved his descriptions, his picture of El Kantara, the gate of the Desert, and of the garden on the edge of the desert. I longed to have my own garden on the edge of the desert. I was sure that my happiness lay in the wide horizon and the peace. I wanted the colour, I longed in fact to live as he did and in the same sort of places. He took me out of the environment from which I longed to escape. He seemed to understand this, and let me pour out my soul to him, Slav fashion, during those midnight hours; he even poured out his a little in return.

When he went abroad I wrote to him for fear we lost touch and the blind of the window be drawn down. I would criticize his heroines, which always provoked a reply. He took the women of his creation very seriously. To him they were real and he studied their evolution very seriously. *Hermione* was a great point of contention. He wrote in her defence on October 17, 1907:

"I like her and am interested in her, so much so that I have written another long book about her called 'A Spirit in Prison.' 'The Call' is only the prelude to this book. Can you only like good-looking people? Don't you look at the brightly-burning spirit within? I get so weary of every heroine in a novel either 'splendidly beautiful' or 'not strictly beautiful perhaps but strangely alluring,' and I know one or two plain women worth more than them all, if one looks the spirit in the face. Spirits have their beauty as well as faces, and some beauties have very ugly spirits. But of course we are much governed by beauty. I, being a man, am as susceptible to it as most men. Perhaps you realized that the other day. But I also saw the kindness looking out of your eyes—or believed I did, and that was an additional pleasure. Hermione in her ugliness is quite as interesting to me as a beauty, and in my second book—which probably you will never read—I have made an elaborate study of her psychology and carried her to her right place. She never ought to have married Maurice. But we do so many things we ought not to do, and pay for them all. You are young, and have the gifts of youth now, but surely some day you will know that lots of plain women feel and *need* quite as much as the beauties, and deserve as much, and often more, than many of them. I say all this and yet I have almost a cult for beauty, and am often depressed to the soul by ugly things. I abhor ugly surroundings and am always drawn to beauty for its own sake. It ought to be the outward manifestation of inward beauty—like nature's beauty, which always seems to me to be expressive of the spirit of the Creator.

"You are saying to yourself, 'What a bore he is.' I can hear you, but never mind."

And this from his garden at Taormina in November:

" . . . I have hundreds of violets, the roses are coming on in quantities; geraniums, camelias, wallflowers, red hot pokers, hyacinths, pansies, etc. The almond blossom is over, but my peach trees are budding. This is a lovely place to work in. . . ."

VII

We lived now a good deal at Brede, in the intervals of London, and I embarked upon the planting of a "friendship garden." It seemed an alternative to the autograph album of tradition, and seemed to me more a living, colourful reminder of one's friends.

The garden still exists to a lesser degree to this day, and superstitiously, I have come to regard as faded and finished those friendships whose flower representatives have not survived.

I observed as time elapsed that a plant would shrivel and die suddenly, especially when the donor became unfaithful after having sworn undying devotion, and the death of the plant coincided with the date of infidelity!

Once, when I had made up my mind to get married in order to satisfy my disappointed mother, I went to my garden, rather tearfully, to say good-bye to my "friends," wondering what would happen to them all after I had gone away. Some Antoine Rivoire rose trees that Wilfred had given me caught my skirt and held me. This decided me; I realized I had contemplated a foolish thing.

The selection of plants by my friends is still a wonder to me. Princess Margaret naturally sent her name flower, a great ox-eyed daisy that eventually spread half across the garden. The Duke of Connaught, a connoisseur in these matters, sent various species of bamboo, which have become a jungle. George Moore wrote that: "The flower that came into my mind at once on reading your letter was a fuchsia, so why should I seek further? When I was a child I liked fuchsias better than almost any other flower." (One supposes he must have liked to pop the buds.)

Hichens, whose favourite heroine I had just criticized, answered: "You don't know how sensitive I am. I ought to send you a specimen of the sensitive plant for your garden, but I will try and get hold of a carnation. I love carnations."

I could not resist asking him if it would be a green one, to which he replied: "No, the carnation is pink, not green. . . . How can you have the heart to attack me?"

Rudyard Kipling's contribution was lavender and rosemary. Sir Frank Swettenham's an apple tree grafted with a bunch of mistletoe. A. E. W. Mason, who evidently thought I was planting a grove instead of a garden, sent me a *Viburnum Placatum* to spread all over the flower bed and smother all the friends in its vicinity.

The most diverting of all the contributions was that of Lord Howard de Walden. He was one of my rather secret friendships; nobody knew about this except George Moore, whose great friend he was, and Lady Cunard, who owned a large bronze bust of him by Rodin! He was a delightful person, charmingly cynical, sardonically humorous, shy, elusive, critical with a touch of genius. He was all too modest about his own literary capabilities. It is significant that he is descended from the man who first wrote blank verse. His own achievements in the same line would have earned him a conspicuous place had he been of those who are stimulated by necessity. He loathed society and preferred to smoke his pipe and wear no collar, and compose his verses in a corner of his marble palace, of which few at that time saw the interior. Sometimes he came to Brede and smoked his pipe among my friendship plants, while I delved. Our friendship managed to survive my mother's intensive cultivation. He even corrected my proofs for me whenever I burst into periodic print, and I accepted his literary judgment unquestioningly. The plant that he sent me for my garden (really men have strange taste) was a sea buckthorn. It had a pleasant grey foliage, he said, and would at the right season have a decorative berry. The season came and went, but the sea buckthorn remained undecorative. It ill became me, however, to mention the disappointing fact.

One day I received a letter—eight pages of indignant fulmination. He had just learned from his gardener that the plant which among all others he had chosen to send me never would have berries unless planted two by two, male and female, side by side: "I had given the vegetable world credit for more sense."

The incident was all the more humorous because he was notoriously averse to marriage, and fled most girls on principle.

The second buckthorn was dispatched in due course, but —neither one nor the other has ever produced berries. They must have been, and doubtless are, a pair of bachelors or spinsters. How should one tell whether a sea buckthorn is male or female? And if it should prove to be a female, should it still retain the name of *Buck*thorn?

As I review my garden in my mind, I seem to see a tall golden privet tree that still lives and rocks in the wind. The poem that accompanied it runs in my head:

"If I send you a privet,
What will you say?
In order to rivet our friendship,
I'll give it,
This golden leaved privet
To brighten your way.
If I send you a privet,
What will you say?"

The privet lives and the rhyme survives, but the donor's name is beyond recall, faded into the misty past.

VIII

Although I was now psychologically far more in my element than I ever had been, home conditions were growing increasingly distressful. My father said we must "never talk poor," and so we struggled on, smiling in the face of misfortune in order to dissemble the truth to the world. This had become almost a habit from earliest times, and we always had somehow pulled through; but at last bankruptcy loomed so close that there was a hush, almost of death, upon our house. My father told my mother that if it happened he would shoot himself.

From our childhood we had heard of bankruptcy as a kind of sword of Damocles hanging perpetually over our heads; so perpetually did it hang that Peter and I had often hoped it might fall and rid us of the suspense. My mother said it must not be allowed to fall while the boys were at Eton. After that it must not fall because it would injure my marriage prospects. The real reason, however, was that it would deprive my father of his long-cherished parliamentary dream.

He was the greatest optimist, and regarded his difficulties as transitory. At all times he had at least ten "irons in the fire," and if only one of them matured according to his expectations, he would be in the pink of prosperity. He thought in terms of millions, not of thousands. Three times in his life his ambitions were justified. He made a fortune in Australia, one in India and a third in Canada. Each would have been sufficient to endow an average family for life, but he invested in wild schemes that his visionary mind believed in, and more quickly than we could melt those fortunes they melted themselves.

This making and losing of fortunes affected his children intimately. We were, so to speak, the victims of his destiny.

"When I am down, everyone around me must be down; when I am up, everyone shall share," he said. Unfortunately he was more generally "down."

Thus, bankruptcy had long been a theme of debate. As other children might discuss pirates or shipwrecks or treasure islands, we assiduously studied the advantages and disadvantages and moral aspects of bankruptcy. The advantages, to my mind, were obvious. It washed out all debt so that one could begin again at the beginning. I had some vague understanding of the working of a debt career, of how money is borrowed at insane percentages to pay the interests on former borrowings, in order to pay some other debt that has become acute; so that the vicious circle grows ever larger and more entangled. Why not wipe it all out and live differently? Why not make a sacrifice of pride in order to have peace of mind?

"Peace of mind"? We never had it. In London we never knew when we entered the drawing-room whether bailiffs would be sitting there or not. Once when Peter and I returned from a walk and rang the door bell, it was answered by an unknown man. We protested to our mother: "How can you, at such a moment, when we are so hard up, engage a new servant?"

She answered: "Hush! It's a bailiff; I've given him ten bob, and he's promised to open the door and clean the mirrors."

One grew to know the type. Bailiffs are usually heavy, thickset men in overcoats, who sit in the best chairs, all hunched up and apathetic as if they had nothing to expect and nothing to say. They do not stand when you enter the room; they do not apologize and they do not explain. I knew also the "writ," which is a blue paper, and the gentleman who brings it always comes to the front door. In the country you can see him coming and go for a walk in the opposite direction. In London it is different. Our butler had a specially pompous manner that he reserved for these discreet announcements:

"Sir, a gentleman has called to see you."

To which my father, without looking up, nor asking who or what, would answer with dignity:

"Tell him I am not at home."

If ever the "gentleman" did manage to buttonhole him he got a pretty poor reception.

I always knew when things were getting acute, for then my father, either from incentive to economy, or in order to distract his mind from home affairs, would propose us by telephone to lunch with "dear Duchess Milly," or "dear Lady Dudley," to "those dear Lonsdales'," or to "the dear Whitelaw Reids'." . . . There were heaps of them, all "dears" and they always seemed pleased to see us, probably because my father, even in his most tormented moments, was a very delightful person. I used to marvel at his mask to the world, and how he managed to preserve his spirits and not allow himself to be crushed by the endless struggle. I have heard it said that troubles have an ennobling effect upon the character, but there seemed to be nothing ennobling about poverty, unless it be a voluntary poverty like that of St. Francis. The inability to pay what one owes is surely degrading, but should it necessitate so serious a solution as suicide? I pondered this. Peter was away at sea and I had no one in whom to confide my great fear and horror. I looked at my father's furrowed face and wondered each day whether I saw it for the last.

It was his custom to sleep for half an hour after lunch, and I tiptoed to his door to listen. Would he sleep? Could he sleep? Or would the horrible sound of a shot fired startle the house? What agony of mind was mine those days!

In the midst of this unfinished drama came an invitation from the Connaughts to a week-end party at Bagshot Park. Princess Margaret and Prince Gustaf (now Crown Prince through the death of King Oscar) were on a visit to England and the party was for their friends. I determined to throw off all care and try to enjoy myself to the utmost during that short time. The first night I was taken in to dinner by Lord Dudley, and we had hardly got beyond the first course when he began to tell me how sorry he was that my home was going to be sold up.

"You must explain to your mother," he said, "that it is no fault of mine, the affair is entirely in the hands of my trustees and I am powerless."

I knew, of course, that my home was in danger, but I did not know that Lord Dudley was one of the many Peters from whom we had borrowed to pay the many Pauls. The information imparted under such circumstances overwhelmed me with a great sense of self-pity. I looked around the table at the brilliant bejewelled company all laughing and lighthearted and I wanted to cry. Then the incongruity of the occasion began to appeal to me, and I saw it all as a colourful farce. Was not the intense light and shade of life almost interesting? Here was something real at last to counterbalance the sham that I had so long resented. At least I was no longer sheltered, and this was no sham!

Years later, when I was lunching alone with H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett and they fell to discussing the psychology of pain, Bennett said that whenever he was unhappy he analysed it and found it interesting. And I remembered that night at Bagshot Park, and that after the first shock I, too, had found it interesting.

However, I arrived home on the Monday morning with my soul in rebellion, cursing a social scheme of things that necessitated such situations, and I declared angrily:

"I'm sick of all this. I'm going to be a governess!"

My father laid aside his book, removed his reading glasses and looked at me in a kind of ironical way:

"I should advise you, my dear, to find a husband; it is more permanent."

I may add that he never did go bankrupt. Great sacrifices were made on the part of my mother to save him, and something inadvertently happened that helped me considerably to see everything in a new aspect. It was quite a small incident: E. V. Lucas gave me a little volume of short stories by Chekov. In it I discovered a heap of characters—intense, purposeless, foolish and human, that reminded me of ourselves. From that time I began to see us as a degenerate Russian family, and all that had seemed so tragic became grotesquely humorous. I dramatized some of the scenes; our conventionally furnished room, its shabby genuine Louis XVI furniture inherited from an American grandmother who had lived in Paris, the faded silk readapted, the pink Bartolozzi prints on an old rose wall, a crystal lamp, a bunch of purple tulips in a crystal vase. My mother in an écru lace dress sorting out the invitations from among the bills that had just been delivered by the post. My father in the bergère chair, too small for him, his long legs stretched out, flinging down the evening paper impatiently.

"I must find the money, I must find it by Monday—or else . . ."

"Don't worry, darling," from my mother, "the American money will be coming next month and you can have it all."

"But that won't help me; it's not hundreds I need . . ."

"Don't you think you ought to dress? It's ten o'clock."

"I'm not going!"

"Oh, but you must! The King and Queen will be there and you will see all your friends; it will cheer you."

A grunt from my father.

"You know you love the Whitelaw Reids—and such a lovely house, and you never know, perhaps you may meet someone there who . . ."

My father gets up and stalks majestically from the room. According to Chekov a revolver shot should now be heard outside the door and I wait expectantly. There is a tensity in the silence. But my mother says:

"Put on your white and crystal to-night, Clare, I want you to look your best, for if we should go bankrupt you may not have such another chance."

In less than half an hour my father is shouting to us upstairs:

"Come on, we're late!"

Try as I would to raise the matter to the level of a farce, it sometimes defeated me. I would then seek alleviation in writing on abstract themes to Hichens. I could not tell him the cause of my depression, but I encircled the subject of happiness and moods and if he suspected I was not happy I hoped he might think the reason was more interesting than it really was. He wrote back from Meadowside, Tankerton:

". . . Forgive a short answer to your very interesting letter. I am plunged to the neck in a book, and have very little spare time just now. I am going up on Friday for the last Stafford House 'tarantella' but I have had to refuse all other gaieties this summer. . . . Work is a great happiness and interest in one's life, and helps one to forget or surmount lots of worries and troubles. I should be miserable without it, and you will be far happier with it. You say 'Are you happy?' Sometimes I am wretched and sometimes I enjoy life a good deal. But I fall too easily from one mood to another, and see the miseries of life too plainly. I realize them too personally to be very happy, and my indignation too often goes to work in the dark places.

"*I want peace, and two or three people whom I care for, and who care for me; work and beauty and the sun*, and then often I love life. But things are horribly uncertain and if I have any keen happiness I always fear lest it shall be taken away from me. One can train one's spirit, but I think it is very difficult to find one's happiness entirely in oneself. I also try not to expect too much. As to prayer—I like the Moslem way of prayer which is chiefly adoration and worship. I seldom ask for concrete things. I think the best prayer is to be helped towards a happy yielding of one's individual will to the great governing will, to be helped to cease from struggling uselessly against what is intended to be in one's life—to accept in fact what comes, without indignation, terror or despair. No doubt you will marry. I think you will be far happier with the right companion than alone (though far happier alone than with the wrong companion). The great thing is to be self-controlled without being self-concentrated.

"Good night.

"Yours ever,
ROBERT HICHENS."

IX

Shane Leslie was now at Cambridge. He had pulverized his family by turning Roman Catholic and by his intention of taking Holy Orders.

It was difficult to view his decision in the proper light; Leonie's point of view was other than mine; she considered the political complication in a growingly unrestful Ireland, of a Catholic heir to a Northern Protestant estate. She also regarded the Catholic Church as cramping and narrowing to a promising literary career. My own feelings were conflicting. I had great leanings to Rome, dating from my convent days, since when I had an altar in my room with candles and a figure of Our Lady with the infant Jesus.

I could not have explained the joy with which I kept two little pots full of fresh flowers always at her feet, or the comfort I sustained from kneeling before her when I said my prayers. The Catholic religion has a devotional quality which appeals especially to women.

Shane a Catholic, would have seemed to be a completion of our old-time fellowship, instead of which it removed him unaccountably far from me. Our camaraderie was no longer compatible with his ascetic vocation. He turned from me simply because I was a woman and he could not touch my hand because, he said, virtue would go out of him. He did once, however, invite me (the unexpected favour could not be missed) to visit him for the day at Cambridge, to meet Father Hugh Benson at lunch. All the time that Father Benson was there Shane was his delightful old self—full of humour and wit. Father Benson, too, was charming and treated me as one of them, so that almost we were a little band of Catholics.

After luncheon Father Benson left. Shane walked me down to the river bank and told me to sit down on a bench while he went off and coached an eight. I waited so long that when he came back to fetch me it was time to go to the station to catch my train. I said to him:

"Shane, how could you leave me all the afternoon like this, when I have come so far to see you?"

And he answered:

"One cannot talk for more than two hours a day."

This losing of Shane filled me with resentment, for although of late years we had grown rather apart on account of my worldly life, I always felt that he was at hand in case I needed him. I loved Shane as I loved Peter, and I felt just as I would if Peter suddenly turned away from me. Moreover, I regarded his contemplating Holy Orders as a kind of cowardice, a shrinking from the discipline of the world's lessons. Once more I sought for sympathy in my patient friend Hichens. The answer that I received, however, was very different from that which I looked for:

Sea Grange,
Tankerton, Kent.
July 22, '08.

"Your letter interested me, but I did not agree with everything in it. Mrs. Leslie's son may not be a coward. He may simply have a real vocation for religion. He may live in the things of the spirit, and the world and all the things that seem so important to most of us, may seem so shadowy to him that he could not take them seriously, or pass his life as we do. There are people with the religious vocation, just as you and I may have a vocation to be writers. Human beings differ so immensely in temperament that I never expect them to conform to my ideas, when I can't—half the time—conform to theirs. My feeling about monks is not the same as yours. I have known monks too well to feel as you do about them. Their lives are often very strenuous and admirable. The Trappists of Africa, for instance, the White Fathers of Africa, and others I have known: I admire such lives far more than I can admire the selfish, greedy lives—empty too—of lots of people I meet in the world, who think of nobody as a rule but themselves and are eternally bent on 'having a good time.' Of course there are splendid people in the world, but you must know as I do, in London quantities of people simply devoured by egoism, and greed and selfishness.

"No, you must not come to me for denunciation of priests and monks. They have their valuable place in the world as well as those who live more widely, and taste more deeply of what is called in musical comedies, 'La Vie.'

"How is Mrs. Leslie? I feel very much for her about her boy. It must be very dreadful to feel that he is drifting away where one cannot follow.

"Well, I hope we may meet and disagree about everything very soon, and remain good friends in spite of our different views. I enjoy your letters.

"*Touti saluti.*

Robert Hichens."

"I often wish I were a monk myself."

That autumn on a grey day I arrived in Dublin on my way to the Leslies' at Glaslough. George Moore in a mackintosh met me at the boat and took me across to the station. We had so much to discuss that it was with difficulty that I dissuaded him from a cold and cheerless journey with me as far as Dundalk Junction. He told me that he was rewriting *Evelyn Innes*, and would like to send me the new proofs to read. The recollection of this fills me with confusion, I know that I was not worthy of the compliment. My reviewing and critical faculties were very undeveloped. I did not understand or appreciate *Evelyn Innes* in its right sense. The best I could do was to advise that Georgina, who had red hair, should not be described in a pink dress—an insignificant suggestion, but one which the author accepted with admirable tolerance.

4 UPPER ELY PLACE,
DUBLIN,
Jan. 12, '08.

"I am glad you wrote before you finished the batch of proofs, for it is interesting to hear your impressions of the book as you read it. You had not got further than Paris when you wrote and the theme of the book is not discoverable till the lovers go to Pisa.

"My characters change; they grow, flower and bear fruit—Evelyn Innes is only half the book. Perhaps you will like Owen better later on.

"Anyhow, thank you for writing. I am sorry you are unlike Evelyn in every respect, for if that is so you miss a great deal. I will change Georgina's dress—dark blue would suit her better.

"One point in your letter I will dispute with you when we meet. Like many another you talk of realism and idealism. To me there is only one thing, truth. There are many sides to the truth. *The Lake* was one side, *Evelyn Innes* (first part) is another; to me every side is interesting and I believe that a man may be very material and very sentimental. I believe that one of the great charms of nature is that she is full of different moods and I would (if I could) depict them as nature separates them. In the modern novel men and women are uniformly sentimental.

"Very sincerely yours,
George Moore."

With the concluding batch of proofs he enclosed a further letter:

"To-day I began the re-writing of *Sister Theresa* and am looking forward to some fine scenes . . . (undecipherable) reaches of sentiment unmarked on any story teller's chart. It is interesting to write what hasn't been written before.

"Maybe I'm living in an illusion, but no matter, nothing matters so long as there is illusion."

I often wonder, as I look back, what reactions I might have aroused in George Moore. What jewels of thought might I not have elicited had I unloosed my moods on him as I did on Hichens. He was sympathetic enough and encouraging, but whereas Hichens exhaled an atmosphere of South and East, of flowers and perfume, of "Heaven's colour, the blue," George Moore was sober grey and mist, dismal Dublin and Irish rain! In writing to Hichens my spirit took flight to the places where I wanted to be, but I did not want to be where George Moore was, and although he could have taken my spirit to Italy he did not!

I longed to discuss these things with Shane, but he did not seem to hear me when I spoke to him. He was training for a mystic visionary, and, like the saints who neither washed nor ate, his physical state contrasted sadly with his spiritual advancement. He was haggard and drawn and his eyes had a strange look of hunted frenzy. He seemed to be in an attitude of flight from some mysterious unknown pursuit.

Every night I fell asleep to the sound of his rhythmic intoning of Latin prayers overhead. He occupied the same room that had been his since his schoolboy days. It was at the top of the house under the sloping roof. He would not change it, because he liked its isolation. Large pictures of the Christ hung on the wall and over his bed a huge iron crucifix. On the table next to his bed stood a statuette of the Virgin and Child and a lapis lazuli and silver rosary, which had been blessed by Pius X.

On the one occasion that I dared, uninvited, to invade this sanctum he was standing up facing a lectern upon which was an illumined missal. He ignored my presence, or seemed oblivious of it until he had intoned to the end of the prayer. There was an oppressive smell of incense. He said:

"Sit down."

And I said:

"Where?" for all the chairs were piled with books and loose manuscript sheets. He lifted a load of them in his arms and dropped them with a thud upon the floor, and then he picked up one from the pile and began to pace up and down and to read aloud in Greek. I asked him to translate it, but he said:

"What does it matter what it means? It is the rhythmic cadence of it that counts. . . . Listen. . . ."

And he continued in his musical deep voice. It was a long time before I could present the question that I had come to ask. At last he put down the book.

"Why, Shane, have you turned Catholic, why didn't you preserve your spiritual independence?"

He thought for a moment, screwing his eyes up with the effort of introspective search. Then:

"I don't want spiritual independence, I want intellectual anchorage. You too will come to it some day. . . ."

And this was the only time during two months that he vouchsafed to speak to me!

X

In September, 1909, on the invitation of Princess Margaret, I returned to Sweden and we devoted the autumn days to painting. In the interval since my last visit she had been working very seriously and had made tremendous progress under the tutelage of Prince Eugen and some of his artist friends. We converted the ballroom into a studio and the sketches we did outside we finished at home. Wet canvases strewed the room, and a smell of turpentine pervaded all the apartments. We sallied forth in the early morning and ignored the luncheon hour unless the Crown Prince happened to be expected. Usually, however, he was occupied at the military school or barracks, and luncheon would be left to sizzle on heaters in the dining-room until we returned, except on Sundays when we behaved like Christians and went to the English Church, after which the King came to lunch. Even on these occasions the servants did not wait at table. We got up and changed our own plates and helped ourselves to food from the side table as at an English country house breakfast. When we had finished, if we did not change our plates quickly, the King would do it for us.

Princess Margaret seemed to have succeeded very nearly in canalizing her life along the lines that suited her domestic and democratic character. Her days were very full. There were children who took up a great deal of time. These, whom she adored, and the Crown Prince and the painting, left little spare time.

In a letter to Peter I describe her as "much less royal than she used to be," and proceed to give him instances in detail:

". . . instead of seizing all the comforts and privileges of royalty, she seems to go out of her way to do things uncomfortably! And so when we go off to the country for the day to paint, she affects incognito, puts on *a plain hat, and a very short skirt* [1] and carries her own paint-box, apron and easel. Personally I never carry anything if I can get someone else to carry it for me: there are innumerable lackeys decorated with silver cord who have absolutely nothing to do, but hang about the hall, and one of them might easily have been commandeered to carry our things. A few days ago we took the train to a place a small distance away on the water's edge where a boat had been ordered to be in readiness to take us to one of the islands. The A.D.C., however, had forgotten to order it, so we sat down on our paint-boxes and waited for one to be got ready. No one hurried for they thought we were merely school girls going out to paint. Coming home in the evening the train steamed out of the station under our noses. Princess Margaret waved to the conductor—this time in a regal authoritative way —to stop! But he, unconscious of the royal identity, waved back familiarly and went on, leaving us on the platform with an hour to wait.

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[1] Is she not fifteen years ahead of her time?

"Tired and out of breath, the Princess leaned her wet canvases against the wall, subsided again on to her paint-box, and bade Dagmar (the lady-in-waiting) to find the officials of the station, and to remove all incognito: 'dash the expense, order a special.' The officials were most upset and fussed, wished they'd known, the train would have waited, etc. But what could they do now? The special would take half an hour at least to arrange and would cost three pounds! Three pounds for a doubtful half-hour's advantage was not worth while, so we went off to a hotel to have a bad tea and while away the hour. The dining-room of the hotel smelt so of food that we opened wide every window—and there were six of them *à deux battants* —which was dreadfully English of us, and everyone thought us mad. Then during tea Princess Margaret began a very interesting tirade against being royal, the idiocy of it all, the boredom and the futility. She said she was so unroyal at heart that she was sure she was a changeling!

"Yesterday, further adventures. The motor boat which had been in process of mending at the Naval docks was to be ready at two o'clock. The Crown Prince accompanied us and carried the rugs. Dagmar carried the tea basket and the Princess and I our painting apparatus. We made our way through a dirty dock, amidst boats being repaired, etc., and all the dock workers paused in their work to look at their future sovereigns. Will you believe it, there was no motor boat! Officers were dispatched in various directions, one to the telephone, another to the works, etc. And meanwhile we waited. Word came that in ten minutes it would be ready. The Princess still hugging her bundle of paints and her apron sat down amid the scrap iron, and leaned against a shed. All around us men resumed their work. A torpedo boat was finished and rolled down a hill on lines and launched. This we watched with interest, and all the while men spat around us and cursed and shouted; officers clicked their heels and saluted every time they passed and bluejackets looked and grinned. Still we waited—the Prince never lost his temper and Princess Margaret only said sarcastic things in English and 'Damn' which no one understood, so it was just as if she hadn't said it.

"That night at dinner we discussed the afternoon's failure and I asked, 'What's the use of being royal if you don't take advantage of it?' And Princess Margaret said, 'There are no advantages.' And the Prince said, 'How would you like it?' And I tried to tell them but they didn't understand. . . ."

This simple unroyal life was interrupted by an invitation from the Queen to stay with her on her island in the south near Kalmar. It was a night and half a day's journey, and from Kalmar one crossed to Oland in a large passenger steamship.

At our journey's end we found a purely Italian villa—white marble columns and pillared pergolas, Roman oil-jars, bronze Mercuries and paved courts, in amusing contrast to the Swedish interior. That is to say varnished pitchpine floors and doors, and everything very clean and rather bare, and a creaking wood sound whenever one moves. That is my impression of a Swedish room!

It was a gorgeous autumn, the trees were turning gold, and the sea rolled up on to the island shore with a roar.

The Queen, middle-aged, thin, her hair drawn up rather tightly which showed her ears, was the essence of neatness and of graciousness. She certainly had the royal manner and used it well. As she was not very strong she rested a good deal, or at all events disappeared, and so we did not see her very much.

Only one other person was there beside ourselves. He seemed strangely out of place, a courtier neither in manner nor appearance; he wore rough clothes, ran long knotted fingers through his hair till it stood on end, paced the drawing-room back and forth as if he wanted to get out, drummed impatiently on tables and window panes, emitted grunts instead of answers—and had, in fact, every appearance of a wild man; he was not young and he wore black glasses. This guest—if he can be called a guest, for he was more permanent than visiting, but of this I only learned later—was Axel Munthe, the Queen's doctor.

I had heard of Dr. Munthe all my life and of how he had studied under Charcot the nerve specialist who owed his success to his hypnotic cures. Munthe, whether he acquired it or was naturally endowed with hypnotic powers, became his most apt pupil. In time he out-Charcoed Charcot! He became internationally famous. The things that people say are never worth repeating, but Munthe was an endless theme of discussion and of conjecture, of love and hate. Remembering the things I had heard I was much interested at meeting him. We used to go for long walks—he said I was young and needed exercise. He made me get up at seven in the morning and walk with him for an hour before breakfast. He suffered, he said, from insomnia, and liked to begin his day at dawn. He had a disease of the eyes and had lost the sight of one; the other was threatened. Sunlight hurt him; he preferred the day before the light grew strong.

On one occasion during one of our early walks, he suddenly flung me down into a ditch and told me to lie still . . . the Queen was riding by on a horse and must not see us!

Princess Margaret was much impressed by Munthe's success in making me get up early. She said he was a "most remarkable man"! I certainly dislike getting up early as as a rule, but during those days at Sölliden I used to wake up every morning regularly at the same time, and jump out of bed without hesitation. (If this was Munthe's doing I only wish he would help me to do all the other tiresome things in life as easily.)

Perhaps it was Munthe's presence that was responsible for the absence of ceremony in the Queen's household. One felt she might be ceremonious, and that she would enjoy pomp; but Munthe would, I think, have left the house. He was dreadfully impatient. There was just one regal custom that the Queen clung to, however, and it reminded me of the Dudleys at Dublin. When the guests and "in-waitings"—the common folk in fact—were assembled in the drawing-room before dinner, the double doors of an inner room were thrown open and the Queen and the Crown Prince made an effective entry. At least it might have been effective if there had been more *invités* to witness it.

One evening the village curate was invited to dine, but when the doors were flung open for the royal entry the curate had not arrived. The Queen was quite nonplussed by this hitch in the proceedings. It was like a play when someone has failed in a part. She suggested going back and closing the doors, to begin all over again when the curate arrived, but Princess Margaret, whose sense of humour was aroused, advised her to remain and wait. The poor curate arrived eventually in a lamentable state. Red in the face, dusty, his clerical cloth torn, stammering his abject apologies. He had attempted a cross-country short cut and had gotten tangled up in some barbed wire.

It very soon began to dawn on me that Munthe was the spirit of the place. His genius had architectured the house and planned the gardens; he had sent the columns from Italy. It was almost the replica of a house of his own at Capri. He showed me the photographs. He had four houses on Capri. One that he lived in, one that he let to "people who could appreciate it," one that he let to the Queen, and the fourth which "he lent to friends."

When I heard this I went to Princess Margaret's room and told her about it, and I said:

"I mean to be one of those friends."

She laughed and said: "Who knows?" and "We'll see!"

Before the visit came to an end, Munthe offered to lend me the fourth house. It wasn't really a house at all, he explained, it was a Saracen watch-tower on a cliff 1,000 feet above the sea. I assured him I would arrive in six months' time, but he did not seem to think I would stick to the plan. He said I was too worldly and that even if I did go there I would grow tired of the isolation on a mountain top. I needed people: I was American in my character; I must be perpetually amused. So he went on, arousing me to spirited refutations. We were each of us over-anxious that the plan should come off, but suspected the other of insincerity. I wanted it—God knows—more than anything in the world. I had spent one spring in Tuscany in Shelley's village of Lerici on the Bay of Spezia, and cherished the unforgettable joy of it. Here was another chance and one which would be within the means of our tottering finances.

My father, however, expressed his pent-up disapproval of the plan in a voluminous letter from New York which reached me in November:

Nov. 2, 1909.
NEW YORK.

"I sit down to give you a good talking to—prepare for a lecture on wide lines. I have read your long letter over again, the first one from home, and it satisfies me less and less! It was written after an interval of about a month, it is *self* from beginning to end! What is going to make 'Heaven' for you three or four months away . . . and what a Heaven? You are going to grope about Capri and find out I suppose, *in situ*, that Christ was born during the Augustan period and that He went out in the time of Tiberius. A little, let me admit, that is educational, one tenth part of what you would learn in the Schools and in a tenth of the time. And when March, April and May has flown by, are you any forwarder? Is life working out its warp and woof by one spoolful? I don't see it; I see nothing whatsoever in your plan of things.

" 'Well,' you say, 'what is the matter, what do you propose?'

"To which I reply that there is an immense deal to do: you have missed great opportunities. I have never pointed them out to you for the reason—a bad reason—that I am extremely proud, that is among my other complexities, and to suggest to my child that she might have helped me immensely and can, is frankly disagreeable to me.

"I have now got to the time of life when the electric spark is out. When one makes no new friends. By the time evening comes I am tired—I have done my day. You are a beautiful woman with a mental equipment which, rightly employed, might have helped me infinitely. God forbid that you should angle for men whether old or young. But take a tiny episode of last Saturday; five years ago on the same ship leaving New York, I introduced old J. Pierpont Morgan to Lady Algy. Well, there he was to say good-bye and when she arrives his yacht is at her service, his house open; if Algy were what he is not—a business man—Morgan would advise him and nurse his efforts. There is nothing whatever compromising, he is old and she desperately delicate and draws near, I fear, to her end. But if you would look around and make useful and not merely Bohemian or ornamental friends, I might, and thus you and your mother and Oswald might, have been much further along the road!

"At this very instant, I find myself asking with little doubt as to the reply, might not Rivers Wilson have intervened more actively in protecting me against the fraud of Hays, had you been a little more attentive to these two old people. God forbid that I should seem to set you angling for financiers or their ladies, but there is all the difference in the world between that and what fits fairly into a working life. I re-state it—that you are a charming companion; had you come to America with me once or twice during the past four lean years, you would have helped me to get forward in a thousand ways. At Washington, here and in the West.

. . . . . .

"Here then I close my Chapter. Much of it you won't approve. Some of it I little like writing, but you will understand. What remains for your amendment is this—don't be content to butterfly in the sun. *Get down to the plot and plan of life;* it is not enough—not nearly worthy of you—to stick seeds in a garden patch. You have got those qualities which might yet leave a deep impression on contemporary life. You are a dear and I love you, but for all that, you have left undone a heap *and you will have to account for years of lost opportunity.*

"And so perhaps with a tinge of disappointment, yet there goes over to you as always, much love,

from M. F."

The humorous side of the letter, to my mind, was the fact that "Lady Algy" referred to, for whom Pierpont Morgan displaced his yacht, was the only other person besides Dr. Munthe who owned a mountain top at Capri! Not the same mountain top. There would not have been room for them both. She owned a hill all her own and her garden which cork-screwed round it enabled her to follow the course of the sun throughout the day, to shelter from whichever wind might blow and to plant flowers that thrived in every aspect. To Capri she retired every year for far longer periods than I proposed to spend on Munthe's mountain. I was so determined to realize my project that I overruled all the family's denunciation. I meant to go. I would have borrowed the journey money and run away from home. But the fact of Lady Algy's presence on the island influenced my father's decision in the end.

My mother and I were met by Munthe at Anacapri, which we reached after a long zig-zag drive up the mountain side. Carriers were in readiness who conveyed our luggage on their heads and preceded us to our destination. We went down a winding path through olive groves carpeted with yellow daisies, past "Materita," Munthe's lovely villa, and along a goat track in single file for a distance of—no, I won't say how far, nor where. I remember how preciously he guarded "Guardia," that none except a few peasants living near, might know of it. Even the postman was not allowed to bring me letters, but had to deposit them at "Materita."

To tell about "Guardia" would be like photographing a Moorish woman, and because I appreciate Munthe's friendship and because—well, because his uncanny power is far-reaching—I must be prudent! I may say, however, that a stone wall encircled a garden containing a little house which my mother lived in, and across the garden an old watch tower on the edge of the cliff, which I had to myself. It consisted of a sitting-room, full of books and flowers and old Italian furniture, from which a ladder led up through a hole in the ceiling to my bedroom. It was domed and had white tiles on the floors, a coloured porcelain Madonna over the bed and whitewashed walls. In the face of one window the sun did rise and in the face of the other it did set. There was a delicious simplicity as of a convent. I thought about being alone—no one in the tower but just myself, and I never had been alone before. Munthe said there was nothing to fear.

"Not even the ghost of the watchman?" I asked.

"The watchman was to guard and protect, not to assault," he answered, and so I felt quite safe, and I was very happy. It was Italy at last!

During the ensuing weeks, Munthe ruled me with a rod of iron. He was by nature domineering and dictatorial; he set himself to enforce all kinds of rules, with which, however, I was in such complete accord that conforming made me appear docile. For instance, I must never go for long walks alone. This I had no need to do, for he was always ready to accompany me and a pleasanter companion could not have been chosen.

I must never, he said, go down to Capri, which was a foul place full of tourists. I had no desire whatever to go down to Capri!

I must remain, he said, awfully secluded and hidden and quiet, whether I liked it or not. I liked it!

I must live simply, not in the lavish worldly way in which I was accustomed. I never had lived in any but a simple way.

I must try to cast out the Americanism that was in me. I must forget the crowds and the amusements and the garishness of my habitual life, and try to appreciate the stillness, the peace, the grandeur of nature, the atmosphere of the gods that reigned on my mountain cliff.

And I laughed and danced for joy because I had found the realization of my dreams.

I called him Tiberio; the name seemed to belong to him. He had the qualities and faults of Tiberius; his tyranny and kindliness, and his vanity also. He might have been, and I believed he was, a reincarnation of the Imperator, drawn back to the scene of his past and doomed in this life to pay back an overburdened Karma. The mosaic floor of the Palace of Tiberius stood in Munthe's garden amid its own ruins, but the scenic background remained unchanged.

Every morning before the light was strong, Tiberio and I met somewhere outside my gate and went for a long walk. I was never sure where he would be. Sometimes I was impelled thoughtlessly to start off in a quite unusual direction, and sure enough, it always led me to him.

During the glare of the day which obliged him to remain in his cool, darkened house, I sat in the olive groves sketching. All day and every day I sketched. Everywhere there was a background of vivid blue, either sea or sky, and the fantastic silhouettes of twisted thousand-year-old stems. Munthe's garden, too, was an endless delight, full of orange trees and terraces, pergolas where geraniums grew like weeds, and shady paths bordered with acanthus. His house had Greek carved marble doorways and the windows were inset with twisted marble columns.

When I sat sketching one day in a rather distant grove, hidden from sight of the path by a wall, a familiar voice shouted:

"Hullo, hullo! I know you are there."

How he knew I was there, for no one else knew, it was useless to ask.

Only once did I ever see him without his black glasses. He took them off deliberately and looked at me. The sensation was indescribable. I cried out as if hurt, and turned away, but without knowing the reason why. I always wished that I could face his eyes again, the second time I should have been prepared.

Shortly after this incident I dreamed that a monster with one eye, a kind of Cyclops, came up the ladder through the hole in my floor and that his eye cast a blinding light in my face. It had seemed a very dreadful dream in the night, but by the light of day it seemed less dreadful. The next morning before I had time to speak, Tiberio said:

"I know you have had a bad night—I am glad, I am very glad. You kill me with your vitality. Now to-day you will be a little tired."

When the glare of the day was over he went to see the Queen, who, I may add, was extremely displeased with him for bringing me to Anacapri. Sometimes, from my look-out post, I saw her familiar figure in a tight tailor-made, surmounted by a man's hard straw hat, walking down the stony track that led to the lighthouse, followed by her suite, dressed in imitation of herself—a comically sedate procession. Fortunately I lived in the back of beyond, and never crossed her path.

I find myself still wondering to what extent Munthe influenced her life and character, for influence he must have had. No one could live in the shadow of his company and not be affected. Although he was by no means infallible, his opinions carried conviction. They were carefully and seriously thought out. He was able to dominate one with his knowledge; he had read everything that was worth while in English, French, German and Italian without the meagre mediumship of translation.

His tastes and talents were wide and varied: he knew about music, and one could listen for hours while he played the piano. He was a connoisseur of Greek sculpture. Periodically he would produce some marvellous Greek fragment and explain he had fished it up from the sea. His house was like a museum. Above all he was a student of Nature. He loved animals and knew about flowers and trees and birds with the instinct of an elemental. The great tragedy of his life was his affliction of the eyes, which cruelly divorced him from his two greatest loves—the sun and the sea.

Whatever effect he may have had on others in his environment I do not know. Perhaps he "treated" each in an individual way. In me he sowed the first seeds of Bolshevism! The word was then unknown. Call it what you will, Munthe's teaching where I was concerned, fell on fertile soil. He upheld the simple life, and sharing of whatever one possessed. When my father sent me a present of a hundred dollars, Munthe made me give twenty-five dollars to my maid. He said I had no right to keep it all for myself. His strictures concerning food were equally emphatic. No one required the varieties of food that were served habitually in "courses." One might eat plenty: there was no virtue in going hungry, but one needed only one course. At his table one ate a peasant dish piled high with rice and vegetables, etc., and perfectly excellent, as Italian peasant food knows how to be.

Meanwhile my mother, my poor mother, was so bored on her mountain top. Nor could she decide in her own mind whether Munthe's influence was for good or bad. She was not quite sure whether Munthe himself was a person she ought to like or not. When he was in his abrupt, provoking mood she hated him. When he wanted for some reason to be amiable, she succumbed to his charm. On the whole he was "not the sort of man, dear, who would have attracted me when I was your age!"

A climax was created by the death of King Edward. Tiberio broke the news to us from the Italian paper.

My mother burst into tears. She explained he was a personal friend, "and think how England needs him at this moment. It is the country I am thinking of."

She said she must rush home immediately "for the historic pageant."

"And after the historic pageant is over?" I argued, "and the national mourning casts a general gloom—when we have sacrificed several weeks' enjoyment for two hours' emotion, what then?"

It was unthinkable to leave Italy just when the lilies were in bud and carnations were everywhere, and figs beginning to ripen on the branches. Leave Italy for a funeral in the month of May?

I fought the project with all my might, but for the first time my mother seemed rigidly determined. Tiberio and I put our heads together. He said that if I did not wish to go he would contrive a means of preventing me. My mother must go; she could not be denied her funeral, but I—would be ill, at the last moment, suddenly. Not dangerously but normally ill, and he, a doctor, would forbid me to travel! What chance had my mother against this combination?

Accordingly, on the eve of departure I was unable to rise from my bed. A considerable amount of neat brandy contrived to give me a flush. Obviously I had a slight fever. I was too sick to eat, I could not bear the light, the shutters must remain closed.

My mother tearfully consulted Munthe. "What *shall* I do? Please, dear Dr. Munthe, do advise me."

Dear Dr. Munthe advised I should be left behind.

"I'll have to give it up," wailed my mother.

"Certainly not," insisted Munthe. "You can safely leave your daughter in the hands of an old doctor."

"Unchaperoned?" queried my mother doubtfully.

"She has her own house," he answered.

And so my mother departed along the goat track, all dressed in black, with black kid gloves and a thick veil, preceded by carriers with suit-cases on their heads.

That evening I danced a mad tarantella on the terrace of Tiberio's house, with "Vecchia Maria," who laughed so that she finally fell down in a heap.

He had promised as a condition that he would take me to Naples and put me on the train in five days' time. It was then June and wonderfully hot. The garden was magnificent, the lilies in full bloom. Tiberio observed my dread of the passing days. He knew that for me it had been unforgettably beautiful. Not until the fifteenth day did we leave. His servants accompanied us to the village where the carriage awaited us. They wept, they kissed his hands, and village women presented him with large bouquets and threw flowers after us as we drove away.

Two days we stayed in Naples, and then we travelled to Rome.

The city was dead, the heat suffocating, the glare blinding. We drove straight from the station to "Cook's." I waited while he made the arrangements for my journey. After a few minutes he returned with the news that there was no sleeper to be had for ten days! We telegraphed this to my mother but gave her no address. We then drove to the Albergo Colonna, a modest-looking hotel in spite of its splendid name! It was in a narrow street next to the flower market on the Pincio steps. The rooms were like white convent cells, but with big double windows that opened on to an inner court, where there were orange trees in bloom that smelt like Paradise. There was a fountain too, and the sound of it was like music as one fell asleep.

Every morning Tiberio brought me cherries from the market, and strewed my breakfast tray with violets. Every evening by moonlight we visited some famous ruin. The first time I ever saw the Colosseum it was a white night, and the cats in the caverns cried so hideously that I imagined the wailing of spirits of martyred Christians. We spent long hours on the Pincio, and I remember as we walked up the hill he complained bitterly of the paving stones which stood between him and God's earth. This love of the soil, of the touch of it and the smell of it, was profoundly developed in him and has remained with me ever since, almost a passion.

Before we parted he told me I should marry. It would be more than ever difficult for me to live at home, he said, now that I had tasted of freedom and the life I loved. I protested that I could only marry an Italian, and he answered that Italy should always be a garden and a holiday, not a cookhouse, a washhouse and a nursery! I must marry someone who, *not* being Italian, could afford to give me Italian days. This counsel he planted firmly in my mind. I had *got* to marry; it was more than mere suggestion, though suggestions from Tiberio generally matured into facts.

And so we parted, I dismally to England, and he to rejoin his Queen in a petty German court!

XI

My father was now deeply concerned about me, and perplexed. He seemed to think that some very definite decision of his could alter the direction upon which I was sailing, but he did not know what sort of a decision it should be. To him Italy was obviously a waste of time, but London seasons were evidently a waste of money, and yet I contained material with which something worth while could be made. But what?

From Vancouver he wrote for advice to my guide, philosopher and friend at Rye, believing rightly no doubt that Henry James understood me as my family did not and could give him direction as to my vocation. Before the letter reached Henry I had chosen my vocation; I had got engaged all of a sudden and unexpectedly to Wilfred Sheridan. The flattering and superlative reply that was mailed back to my father did little, however, to placate him.

LAMB HOUSE,
RYE.

"MY DEAR MORETON FREWEN, *July* 26, 1910.

"I have written to Clare who beautifully wrote me about her engagement—and I have delighted in the exquisite effusion you gave me the privilege of reading. What a splendid spontaneous vivid letter, full of life and youth and perception and feeling and sympathy, and of admirable observation!

"What a joy for you to have in so delightful a daughter so delightful a correspondent! It seems to me the fact of her engagement—since you wrote—answers or forestalls many of the questions about her future vocation, her gifts, what she had best 'do,' etc. that your letter contains. She had best 'do,' it seems to me, exactly what she is doing (I know W. S. a little) and her genius, her brilliant character and happy imaginations—her dazzling personality, in short—will take care of itself, of all of themselves. She will lead her life and find her happiness, make use of her gifts and shed her beautiful influence *whatever* scheme you may conceive for her. So be happy and confident yourself, and let her mother be, in the good fortune of having so radiant and interesting a daughter. I shall take the liveliest and most affectionate interest in whatever stage of her future I may be 'spared' to witness.

"It strikes me that she will make, in the way of contributing to the illustration of 'heredity,' etc., a most interesting marriage. May all good go with it.

"What good times you have, you and she, anyway. Your letter from Vancouver reflects felicity and observations on the *joie de vivre* almost as much as hers from almost uncannily vivid and vertiginous Anacapri, where I too have stayed with poor, strange and interesting and stricken Munthe.

"I am yours and Mrs. Frewen's and the shining maiden's all faithfully ever,

HENRY JAMES."

Barely two weeks had elapsed since my Roman parting with Munthe, and his advice was still ringing in my ears: I *must* get married. But I never dreamed of marrying Wilfred. That dream had been, as I thought, completely killed years ago. I was sure I no longer cared, though it was evident that I could not care for anyone else. Life had made me contemptuous of sentiment. My intention was to accept an invitation to Holland, where an old castle rising out of two moats stood waiting to welcome me as a bride. The project had been simmering in my mind for more than a year, and Munthe's power of suggestion decided me. My mother was so pleased that she forgot her anger over my dawdling in Italy.

We left Brede (it was the longest day of June) and stopped a night in London on our way. As we no longer had a London house I stayed with Aunt Jennie Churchill. She had a dinner party and had invited Wilfred. We had not met for two years. We were both much changed. He was maturer and more beautiful—I was more experienced and more amusing. He asked me my plans. I told him:

"To-morrow I go to Holland."

"What for?"

"That no longer concerns you!"

"What? Are you going to marry?"

"You always advised me to."

"But you would be happier in a cottage with me than in a castle with him."

"I have always thought so."

We communicated our decision to our families—his and mine—and they were not pleased. Neither of us had any money, and money in their eyes was the supreme consideration. Wilfred was heir to an estate that required an heiress. At the moment he just earned sufficient to keep a wife: it was in a kind of gambling spirit that we took the chance. People might shake their fingers and their heads at us, people whose sense of precaution kills joy. We disregarded them.

All the arrangements for a worldly wedding which followed combined to rob the occasion of its sublimity. My levity is of all things the outstanding feature in my mind, and the letters of congratulation, the presents, the trousseau, the reporters, the chaos! Lady Naylor Leyland contributed the loan of Hyde Park House. The larger the house the greater the scope of confusion. Wilfred fitted but dimly into it all, seemed hardly to belong or to play a part. There were moments I wished we had escaped to a registry office, but the wedding presents were furnishing our house, and that was an important consideration. Now and then Munthe would flash across my mind, with his love of the simple life, his horror and contempt for the worldly and the superficial. The simple life I meant to live in the future, this was agreed between us. We would go away from London and live in the country. We would make Italy in England! Wilfred thought the idea was mine, he little knew it reflected Munthe. We found a house after long searching, a Tudor farm-house in Surrey, buried among the beech woods on the estate of Lord Midleton. As soon as we saw the house we decided on an eighteen years' lease! "Until our daughter comes out," said Wilfred with unwarranted optimism.

I thought I saw our future laid out like a map before us, and the stages of our journey indicated children, education, growing up, grandchildren, old age, grey hairs, and two chairs by the fireside. It hardly seemed exciting, but in those days one had not learnt to need excitement.

At last: "The greatest day of your life, dear," as my mother called it. (Alas, it pales before some of the days that have happened since.) The ceremony was for two o'clock. How pass the morning? Mr. Asquith had promised to be present at my wedding, but only on condition that

I went to "his," as he called the wedding of Lord Lovat and Laura Lister who were being married from 10 Downing Street. Their ceremony was to take place at the Oratory at twelve. I promised to be there; it was a pact.

At eleven o'clock my wedding dress arrived, brought in a wooden bandbox by a small errand girl, accompanied by a representative of the firm. Braided footmen and an aged butler opened wide the double doors to receive them. They entered. The small girl still clung tightly to the bandbox. Then the authoritative young female announced that the dress could not be left until it had been paid for, not by cheque but in cash. This graceful message was conveyed by a footman to a housemaid, who in turn delivered it to my mother's maid, who told it to my mother. Not all the cajoling or threatening or insulting could deter the grim young female, who was "merely carrying out orders," so while my mother—apoplectic nearly with indignation—dressed hastily to go out to the bank, the errand girl sat on the bandbox in the middle of the marble hall and I furtively escaped unnoticed from the house and attended the Lovat wedding!

When my turn came I was dressed like every other bride in white satin and a lace veil, but my veil was Princess Margaret's. She lent it to me solemnly for the occasion, and no one knew. Beloved woman, of all my friends she was perhaps the only one who felt any emotional reaction in the fact of my marrying Wilfred after all. She had known such happiness herself, and she wished that her veil, which had been made for her, and never been worn by any other bride, might bring me her happiness. She and the Crown Prince were in the church, and Mr. Asquith, true to our compact, was there also. I refused to say the word "obey," and Wilfred pinched me and Canon Hensley Henson (now Bishop of Durham) paused and hesitated, then went on. In his address he proclaimed how important it was that we should have "common interests and common friends," and Wilfred whispered that he had lots of "*common* friends." And I said how exquisite the blue glass was in the rose windows above our heads, and the Canon afterwards told someone how shocked he was by the utter irreverence of the bride and bridegroom. I too was shocked at myself, but I could not rise above the material atmosphere that had led up to the wedding. When it was over we said good-bye to our friends and were no more seen for five years.

PART THREE

MARRIAGE

I

ROMANCE! I WAS ABSURDLY ROmantic. I thought we could play at being unmarried, living together clandestinely, hidden from the world, he coming back nightly to our house when his day's work was done! Love and toil! Wonderful sounding words —but what toil! This man with a sensitive nervous nature, a love of poetry and of flowers, spent his days at a desk in a gloomy office or in a noisome building like a railway station, called the Stock Exchange, which because of its foul air and the thousands breathing it, had to be sprayed every few hours with stinking disinfectant.

In this atmosphere he had spent his life ever since he left Harrow at seventeen. He hated it. It killed his youth and hurt his health, but his family had instilled into him from an early age the necessity of making money in order that, when his turn came, he might preserve the traditions of Sheridans in Dorsetshire. For if an Englishman is properly brought up and adequately educated and sufficiently imbued with the traditional spirit, he unquestioningly regards property as of far more importance than the individual. It is true that after fifteen years of this ennobling career, Wilfred was able to keep a wife and a home, but the wife he only saw one day a week. For the rest—he returned after dark, too tired to cherish her.

Day by day my romantic dreams took flight like birds on the wing. I had to re-adapt or efface my theories. Nothing was as I had expected it would be.

To begin with, Munthe's teaching proved unworkable, and nearly wrecked the *ménage* in its first days. Wilfred, cold and tired, arriving home after a day such as I have described, was confronted with a dinner consisting of *one dish!*

If peasant food is admirable in Italy, its equivalent in England is honoured by the name of "lodging-house"—at least so Wilfred called it, and asked (rather aggressively, I thought) what I took him for?

"An intellectual," I answered.

Then I learned that English intellectuals must have dinners consisting of several courses, with port wine—old port—at the end of it, or brandy called "Waterloo."

I wondered what Munthe would think. Wilfred was not interested in Munthe. He did not like what he had heard of him, did not want to hear any more, and hoped he never would have to meet him.

I was so thoroughly convinced that Munthe's view of life was the right one, because it had been a happy one, and I became increasingly sure that ours was the wrong one because not even Wilfred, who insisted upon it, was satisfied by it. He wasted his hard-earned money in absurd ways that produced neither comfort nor peace of mind. Five servants did work which in any other country could have been done by two. They complicated rather than simplified life, and revolted me with their grumbling and quarrelling, their grim dissatisfied faces, their desire always to gravitate to towns, their contempt of country scenes and sounds—Wilfred said we had to have them, his mother had them, his sister had them, and he was surprised that my mother hadn't more adequately prepared me to handle the situation. In between these lectures he read Browning out loud, and when I asked him to, he read Yeats.

During the day I escaped from the house which I disliked more and more, and rambled through the Midleton preserves, scattering pheasants and rabbits with my presence. The beech trees were just at the end of their autumn glory, copper and golden leaves fell in showers to the ground, so that one walked on a damp glistening carpet. Always it was damp. The trees dripped, the earth was turned to mud. Then winter came, and froze and thawed the mud alternately. For weeks and weeks unending I walked in bare woods among naked straggling stems, and my footsteps left an imprint in the frosted moss. At dusk there was a loud fluttering of wings and a noisy laughing cackle as the pheasants flew up to roost.

It was very far from realizing my dream of Italy in England, but it had its grey moist charm, and the ten acre field behind our house, which was a rich red rust colour when it was ploughed, compensated for a good deal. But I was very lonely. Munthe had said that people of intelligence did not need the world, and Wilfred said the same thing in almost the same words. It was my marriage stipulation that we should live remote from what Munthe called "the vortex"! And I only had myself to blame if I made such a stupid mistake as to forget that Wilfred was not free like Munthe, that Surrey was not Capri nor English winter as the Bay of Naples.

There was only one solution for my mistake and that was to have a baby, to have perhaps several babies and fill the void. After that one would feel less lonely.

Unfortunately these things cannot be ordered, and try as we would there was no result for our pains.

After a period of five months, punctuated by tears of disappointment, I made up my mind to go up to London and consult a specialist.

The "specialist" to whom I confided my trouble, however, threw his head back and laughed. He told me to go away, and come back if nothing had happened in five years' time!

How could I explain to him that I couldn't face five more winters walking in wet woods alone—he wouldn't have understood, besides *that* was not a doctor's problem. So, realizing the hopelessness of it, I decided to take the matter into my own hands, and communicated my decision to Wilfred, when he had well dined and was comfortably installed in a large deep armchair by the fireside. I meant, I said, to go to Rome. At first he was puzzled, he didn't quite see how that was going to help the situation. Nor could I tell him the real reason, for he hated Roman Catholicism, had already protested violently against the oratory in my bedroom, and would have laughed to scorn my idea of lighting candles on Virgin altars in Roman churches in Rome. It had to be presented to him in quite a different way. I said that the specialist had said that our best chance was a month's separation, that the effect of this in most cases was infallibly successful.

Wilfred thought it over and reluctantly consented.

II

I consulted neither guide nor book. My choice of churches was quite haphazard, I wandered where fancy took me.

First I heard Mass at St. Peter's, and in a side chapel before the altar of the Holy Madonna knelt by the side of a ragged woman who held a little bundle in her arms and crossed herself fervently and seemed to entreat the favour of intercession.

At the Porta San Paolo in the Church of San Paolo, large, modern, dazzling with marbles, alabaster and malachite, I added my candle to the others. Then to Santa Maria Maggiore, where legend relates that the Virgin appeared twice to the Pope Liberius and bade him erect a church wherever on the morrow he should find a fall of snow. At the foot of a little marble stair, in a half-open crypt below the level of the church floor, on the very spot where the snow fell, stood the altar of the Holy Virgin, and the most adorable Bambino carved in marble with a golden aureole round his head. A pink light glimmered from the silver hanging lamp overhead. I left two tall candles burning there.

On March 17, 1911, to the Irish Franciscan Church of St. Isidore. Opposite St. Isidore was a convent door. Someone was coming out. I asked if I could go in. The nun said she could not refuse me, but that it was a private chapel. I left some flowers on the altar there.

Then to the Churches of St. Cecilia, and to the Madonna del Popolo and to S. Maria sopra Minerva, where Dominican monks wandered about in the half-light. To Santa Maria in Cosmedin, built among the pillars of the Temple of Proserpine—where I lingered a long while in an atmosphere of profound quietude.

To Saint John Lateran, through the great bronze doors that belonged to the Forum, and afterwards to meditate in the exquisite cloister.

On March 25th, which was the Festa of the Annunciation, I climbed up the Pincio steps to S. Trinita del Monte and rang the convent bell. A nun, who called herself Mère Mariana, showed me the frescoed church, and the cloister, but, "Where is the Vierge Miraculeuse?" I asked. She led me upstairs to a private chapel, all hung with the gifts of those whose prayers had been answered. Here she left me, realizing that my visit was a mission, and that I must be alone. When I left she accompanied me to the outer door, called me "Mademoiselle," invited me to come back whenever I felt like it and said that my face would remain imprinted on her memory.

Then I returned to Wilfred.

Nine months later a girl was born and we called her Mary Margaret. Mary was the name of Wilfred's mother; he believed that we had called Margaret "Mary" after her.

After Margaret's difficult birth the doctor said I must not start another for a year, and Wilfred said we should never have another because it was so dreadful. But three months after he forgot and I forgot, and he said how nice it would be to have a son, and I thought it would be rather nice for Margaret if she had a brother very little younger than herself to love as I loved Peter. And so, exactly a year later, another babe was born, but it was another girl.

Wilfred never attempted to conceal his disappointment. When the nurse brought the new baby into the room he turned his back and walked away.

Personally, it little mattered to me whether I had girls or boys. There seemed little enough to make an heir for—

merely a name that *once* was great, and a penniless property that had been only two generations in the family and had a curse attached. Wilfred had told me of that curse before we married. No elder son was ever known to inherit. The estate was Abbey land in the time of Henry VIII, and the last departing monk had implanted the curse. One family into whose possession it had passed had died out completely, leaving the tomb of a Crusader in the village church. Through marriage with the last Grant, Wilfred's grandfather had brought the estate into the Sheridan family, from him it came in succession to Wilfred's father, who was a second son, and by the death of Wilfred's eldest brother in South Africa the curse seemed to be steadily fulfilled. If this was not fulfilment it was the last of a long list of strange coincidences. When Wilfred warned me of it I told Shane Leslie, and he reassured me that it could be dealt with. When the first-born was on the way he consulted with W. B. Yeats, who wrote to me that:

"When the time comes, someone will be sent to you who will tell you what to do."

As the child was a girl the matter was not pursued. The second time, again. Yeats bade me keep calm—I gathered that some kind of intervention would come through the Rosicrucian Order, and as it might be necessary for a priest to sleep the night at Frampton, I was obliged to confide my activities to my mother-in-law. She was sceptical but very understanding. She had suffered too much, she said, to prevent me from doing anything that might assuage my anxiety. If someone had to come to Frampton she promised to do everything possible to help, and that whatever had to be done should be done as quietly as possible. This was generous and broad-minded on her part, for she was of Puritanical New England stock and might well have adopted a different attitude.

The birth of Elizabeth again neutralized my efforts, and I felt half relieved not to have a son. Elizabeth was very lovely. She had auburn curls and blue eyes, cheeks like a

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sea-shell and exquisite hands. She was smaller and gentler and less vital than Margaret. I loved her more because Wilfred loved her less.

But as if one were too happy, Providence lost no time in administering a brutal blow. The babe with the face of a Joshua Reynolds angel had suddenly to be dispatched at eleven weeks old with a hospital nurse to a lodging by the sea. From that time I was torn in two. Margaret needed me, and Wilfred said he did, but Elizabeth needed me more. For a year I lived on the railway between the two.

When I was with the one I was perpetually suffering, watching her suffer; and when I was with the others, the torment of uncertainty was unendurable. Hospital nurses followed one upon another, each worn out by the responsibility. Operation followed upon operation. Every penny that Wilfred earned was spent on surgeons and nursing homes, and I would sit for hours watching the little head with matted curls tossing restlessly on ever such a big pillow, lost in such a big grown-up bed.

I exhausted myself with the effort of willing her to live—with passing my vitality, my strength and health to her.

Once when I heard her crying in the next room and knew her wound was being dressed, I got demented and beat my head against the wall. I thought it was not possible that one could endure such mental suffering. I could not sleep, but rocked to and fro in a chair gibbering incoherent prayers. I prayed for support, for someone or something to come to my aid and help me to bear it. A hospital nurse is an efficient but a hard creature, accustomed to witness pain, trained to eliminate emotion, impatient of emotion in others, of negligible moral assistance in moments of crisis.

Throughout Elizabeth's long-drawn-out agony at Westgate I was almost entirely unsupported, until at last I discovered a convent near by. The sister at the door directed me to the Chapel. She must have noticed my distress, for her manner had more tenderness than words; she asked no questions, but left me there alone.

The Chapel was empty and the altar of the Virgin was quite near the door as one came in. I remember throwing myself down on the steps, my head on the marble, my body writhing with entreaty, and it seemed to me in my desperation that I clutched at the robe of the Holy Mother. If miracles could happen, then surely that marble statue, gold crowned, would have come to life and descended from her shrine and folded me in her blue mantle.

Mystic forces were present which transformed the statue into spirit. Her silence gave me strength and comfort. I thought I read pity in her face. Every day I poured out my heart to her in sobbing entreaty and left my flowers on the steps.

It was during the agony of those days that I learned to appreciate what the Catholic religion means to women.

My condition, however, when I got back to Wilfred, affected him to such a degree that he, manlike, and not understanding at all, forbade that I should return to Elizabeth for a while—as if absence could alleviate anxiety.

After some months she got better and I insisted upon her coming home. For some weeks her temperature was normal and my spirits rose accordingly. I believed I saw her getting strong and well. Every day I took her out in her spinal carriage, pausing often on our walks to kiss the little sleeping head. Then, seeing that all was so well, Wilfred begged me to take a holiday. My elder brother was being married in Rome to Maria Nunciante, the daughter of the Duke of Mignano. They wrote begging me to come, and Wilfred said I must stay away as long as I could, for I needed the change.

It was 7 a.m. on a Sunday morning that I arrived in Rome. The sun was brilliant, although the month was February, and the sloping garden of the Hôtel de Russie was full of orange trees in fruit. At midday I received a wire saying that Elizabeth had suddenly collapsed, and would I go back at once.

It was a crushing blow. I hurried off to S. Trinita del Monte, accompanied by my brother's beautiful bride, who in those few short hours endeared herself for a lifetime. Mère Mariana remembered my visit of the previous year. She listened to my story, put her arm round me and led me back to La Vierge Miraculeuse. After a decent interval she came and knelt beside me. She said I must have faith, and that I must make a promise to Our Lady.

"Promise me," she said, "that if your child lives you will join the Catholic Church."

"I have joined it in my heart," I said.

"That is not enough—you must be a member of the Church. You must renounce, you must be baptized."

I argued that my husband would never hear of it—that, in fact, he would disinherit his children if they were Catholics.

"If you have courage," she answered, "he will follow you —your child's life is at stake—promise."

I would not, could not promise.

"I will pray for you," she said, and kissed me. I felt as if someone had taken advantage of my helplessness to blackmail me. I left the convent with my heart in revolt.

I returned to England, arriving home at midnight, and Wilfred met me; he could not speak, but led me to the sick-room. It was half dark, they had tried to hide her from me. She was so wrapped up in blankets, but I saw enough. There was no hope—it was meningitis. At that moment something happened inside me; I think my heart broke.

On the seventh day of watching and waiting, at the seventh hour, after a frightful night, I fell into a deep dreamless sleep. It coincided with the hour of her passing over. It was then that my spirit joined hers and accompanied her safely to the edge of the world . . . such a sad little child had gone back to laugh and play among the happy spirit children. So beautiful she was, such golden-red curls, so fragrant, like sweet spring scents. Such deep eyes she had, the blue of Heaven. She is not dead, she lives for ever in my heart.

III

After this, Wilfred took me to Italy. I had always wished we could go there together, but never dreamed the price I should have to pay.

We went first to Rome, but this time it was pagan Rome for me. I could no longer enter a church nor pray. We left Rome for Naples, and took the boat for Capri. I had no idea whether Munthe was at home or not; I was not sure whether, if he were there, he would care to see me. Wilfred did not want to see him, but was willing to do so as a concession to me. I wanted to show him Munthe's beautiful things, but above all I wanted him to see the wild mountain top where I had spent my happiest days before sorrow came, and where as a keen lover of flowers he would find delight.

After a day spent on Monte Solaro he was so soothed and happy that I dared to suggest ringing the bell on Munthe's *cancello.*

Great was the excitement among my old friends. "Vecchia Maria" threw her arms around me in an embrace: she wanted me to dance a tarantella with her, but I told her I had grown too old. Munthe, unchanged, welcomed us in his usual gruff way. I said, "Well, aren't you surprised?" And he said, "No, I am no longer surprised by anything you do."

He then pointed out some new acquisitions of which he was proud.

At first the atmosphere was strained and I felt ill at ease, but after a while Wilfred began to unbend; he could not help being interested, and Munthe seemed pleased with his knowledge and appreciation. Finally he offered to take us to San Michele, the beautiful villa which is generally "let to some appreciative person," but which happened at that moment to be unoccupied. It is high up and overlooks the Bay. The sun was setting in red and gold behind Ischia. Wilfred exclaimed in wonderment.

It all happened so smoothly and yet so quickly. Wilfred was patting him on the back and calling him "my dear Doctor," and Munthe was calling him "my dear boy." It was quite disconcerting, for Wilfred was not a person who easily overcame his prejudices.

Suddenly Munthe offered to lend us San Michele if we would promise to stay not less than a week. Wilfred, without demur, accepted the offer, and then I realized that not upon hysterical women and young girls only did Munthe's subtle influence work. I made no comment and I asked no questions, but I was curious to read Wilfred's changed mind. I found it in his diary:

"I rather like Munthe, only one must not be civil to him or expect civility. Manners are not in his line. He eats like a wolf, snapping his teeth. Did one not know that he knew most of the personalities in Europe, one would put him down as an ill-tempered hermit. He is a bully and has no respect for women, a fault which he is never tired of exhibiting. And yet he is a genius undoubtedly. He is kind and more than kind to all the poor people at Capri, most of whom adore him and all fear him. He is simple and direct with them and almost affectionate. I walked with him down to Capri and through Capri up to Lady Algy Lennox's villa; the whole way people genuflected, salaamed and welcomed him. . . ."

Our week stretched into ten days and was all too short. Wilfred was transformed into a new personality. He was not aggressively English as some Englishmen are, abroad. He fitted into the spirit of the place as though he belonged. He seemed to be really happy and in his element at last; and I revelled in this new-found companion. News from England, however, kept persistently arriving, and all of it bad. The month was March, the year 1914. Civil war in Ireland seemed inevitable and immediate. Sir Edward Carson was making inflammatory speeches. Ulster was organizing Red Cross Hospitals. Winston had created a slogan that "Ireland will fight and Ireland will be right," and the City—a barometer on these occasions—was slumping badly. Wilfred said he must get back, that he had the responsibility of too many people's money to dare to be absent in a crisis.

"But what a pity to leave it all," he said regretfully. We were leaning over the wall of the pergola that overlooked the Bay, and he made an astonishing suggestion:

"Why don't you remain? It is so lovely here."

Remain without him! What powerful thought wave was this of Munthe's? At any other moment of my life I would have jumped at it, but . . . there was Margaret, still so little, and all that was left to me. I dreaded another tragedy in my absence.

IV

Upon our return to England the problem that absorbed me was a memorial to Elizabeth. She was buried in the little private cemetery belonging to the Midletons, next to their garden. I had no wish for the ordinary heavy marble engraved slab or cross; I felt Elizabeth should have something different.

At the Watts pottery a few miles away, beautiful things were designed and made under the supervision and inspiration of a rare and precious personality, the widow of G. F. Watts. She had built up at Compton, on the spot where Watts had his studio and where he eventually ended his days, a memorial worthy of the man whose life work was creative. The result achieved was of a comparatively high standard considering the lack of artistic talent in the average English worker. Mrs. Watts's vigilance preserved and maintained that standard.

I drove to Compton intending to choose or to design. Mr. Nicol, the Scotch manager, suggested to me that I should take some pounds of clay home with me and try to make something to suit myself.

I fell in with this idea. To make something, however bad, to work for her instead of buying for her, seemed infinitely more suitable. Mr. Nicol gave me a rough idea of how to go about the work, how to build up, how to deal with detail. Someone lent me a modelling tool, and one of the pottery artists—his name was Wren—offered to come now and then and help or advise me. I planned a small kneeling figure of a child with wings, holding up wreaths of roses, for St. Elizabeth's flower was a rose. It was a thrilling discovery that mere mud could be turned into tangible shape, that in fact it could make anything one wished to make. The mere touch of the pliant smooth damp substance was a delight.

How I worked!

The figure took shape, the hands seemed to become real hands, and one day I realized that the face was the face of Elizabeth. My heart beat with emotion. It was the dawn of a new life.

Sufficiently encouraged, I resolved to make a memorial relief to place in the wall of the family pew in the Sheridan church. I applied for admission to the modelling section of the Guildford Technical School, and brought my clay panel with me. I did not aspire to be original, I merely hoped to produce something that would not be amateurish. I wanted to produce in relief Watts's picture of the Angel of Death.

The modelling teacher was interested. We became great friends. I learnt of the conditions under which students had to study. No life class was permitted. The committee, or council or whatever they called themselves, consisted of the butchers, bakers and drapers of the town. Great would be their horror if anyone dared to suggest a nude model for the school.

"But how can one learn anything without it?" I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders:

"This is Guildford, not London," he answered.

And so we had to get on without a life model, and as far as my purpose was concerned it did not matter very much, for I was imitating, not creating. I planned, however, when my memorial should be finished, to study seriously. The teacher of the school advised me, almost begged me to. He assured me it was worth while. He said he had never had a pupil so promising. This might be less flattering than it sounds—one needed to see the other pupils—school teachers mostly—endeavouring to qualify in a general way. Real art students, of course, went to London.

Nevertheless, there was a good deal I could acquire from the Technical School in these early days. I worked assiduously three mornings a week, and the rest of my abundant spare time I worked at home.

I advanced in leaps and bounds, lost all track of time, and while I worked I forgot everything, even that for which I worked, even my loss. Work, the greatest of all comforters, had come to my help. There were moments when a flame seemed to leap up inside me, of inspiration and ambition. I knew it was my real vocation, that although it had come late it had come to stay. I had found myself at last.

But I *felt* more than I could prove. Wilfred was surprised and not a little impressed, but he did not take it seriously. To a friend who knew Professor Lanteri, I said that I wished I could study under him at the South Kensington College of Art. I shall never forget the crushing rejoinder: "He wouldn't teach *you* . . ." meaning that I wasn't and never could aspire to be an art student. There was nothing I could answer back, no way of proving what I felt I could achieve. In my heart I said, "Wait and see." I was so sure that some day Lanteri would *let* me work with him. (The day came when Lanteri *invited* me to work with him, but that was a long way off and other things were destined to happen first.)

Whilst thus absorbed, spring and early summer passed unnoticed. Then unexpectedly, with the suddenness of a storm, the nations of Europe began to fling ultimatums at one another. Regiments with field kitchens and machine guns passed by our gate on their way to Portsmouth, and Margaret in my arms waved to them. The newspapers said this was a purely precautionary measure, but Wilfred returned from the City in a state of profound agitation. Sometimes when, as rarely happened, he was deeply moved, he would be almost clairvoyant.

"The world is going to be blinded with its tears, and there will be millions of widows and mourners of sons," he said.

The next day England declared war.

V

Peter was ordered to sea in a new destroyer, and when we parted we expected never to meet again. We recalled our passionate heartrending partings of childhood, and our tears when I married and he thought he had lost me. Now I was sure I had lost him.

"It is our last parting," I said, but we were superlatively calm and self-controlled.

Meanwhile every form of propaganda was set to work to inflame popular patriotism and produce volunteers:

"We don't want to lose you,
  But we think you ought to go,
Your King and your Country
  Both want you so"

was hurled at audiences from the footlights by painted houris.

Wilfred became sullen and uncommunicative; he spent his summer holiday working in the farthest part of the garden, preferring to be alone, and explained that he was "making up his mind"!

It was in September, 1914, that my mother came to stay with us, her expressed purpose (incorrigible sentimentalist) being to take me and Margaret over to Farnborough to see the Empress Eugénie. My mother, who made her début at a ball at Compiègne, had lived spiritually in the Second Empire ever since.

Margaret was carefully primed beforehand; she promised to be "a goo' girl," to kiss the *imperial* hand, to curtsy, and to present her with a bunch of roses. I *knew* that mama's expectations ran too high. Margaret was not likely to play up. The disillusion (for Margaret) began as we motored through Aldershot, which was thronged with armies of recruits not yet uniformed—so these . . . were soldiers! The child's disgust was undisguised. These shabby crowds were the soldiers of whom everyone said, "How glorious!"

When we arrived at Farnborough the Empress met us in the hall. Margaret gave her one look which implied that if Empresses are old and bent and wizened and dressed in black, her picture book had lied. She would not say "How do?" she would not curtsy, and she clung tightly to her roses.

The Empress laughed.

"Little Princess Clothilde behaved in exactly the same way," she said. Princess Marie-Clothilde referred to, was two months younger than Margaret, the daughter of Princess Clementine of Belgium and Prince Victor Napoleon, and they were staying with the Empress at that moment. Marie-Clothilde was adorably sweet and pretty in a *décolletée* frock with very short sleeves, and Margaret solemnly presented her with the flowers that were meant for the Empress, after which they kissed *nez-à-nez* in the most engaging fashion.

After tea the Empress beckoned mysteriously to my mother who followed her, and I followed too, not knowing what else to do. She led the way to a room which proved to be her private sitting-room. Closing the door carefully behind us, she said, in a low quivering voice to my mother, "You remember?" and proceeded to pull the blinds down one after another to shut out the fading daylight. There was a deliberation and a solemnity in her actions as though she were preparing some mystic rite. Then in the profound silence she went up to a veiled picture on the wall, turned on a light and pulled the veil aside. The light was the only one in the room and it illumined the frail youthful face of the Prince Imperial.

My mother had danced with him at Compiègne. What memories, I wonder, were evoked during the deathlike silence in that moment of contemplation? The Empress was profoundly moved. Tears streamed down her agèd face. She seemed of a sudden more bent and more frail, crushed rather by sorrow than by age.

I was thankful that my mother did not try to find words, for none were adequate. Instead she placed her hand upon the Empress's arm, and they stood so for some seconds, until the Empress led her from the room.

One evening Wilfred arrived from London with a new look in his face, bright eyes and an altered manner. He announced that instead of going to his office he had that morning enlisted as a private in the City of London Territorials. It was quite unnecessary, married men had not yet been called, nor anyone over thirty, but he had decided that one should not wait to be called. He believed—we all believed—that this was "a war to end war," that our generation must die in order that future generations might live.

"The fact is," he declared, "there are moments when the individual belongs to the State and not to the family, and this is the moment."

So we shut up our little house in the woods, which to me had become hateful with its association and memories. We moved to London so that he could "train." At first, like all the other recruits he drilled in a tweed suit. There was a rush on khaki cloth, not everyone could be uniformed; in the evenings he used to try to learn his drill by manœuvring a toy platoon. I had been told solemnly to buy a box of soldiers and was given a list of the words of command. His whole mentality was put to work temporarily on mastering the intricacies of this new career.

One day he appeared for the first time in uniform; I thought him more than ever beautiful. Physical drill and open-air life had done for him what he said it had done for the "Cockney" recruits who drilled with him. *They* were unrecognizable at the end of a month.

We hated militarism, both of us, but I confess that a soldier husband was a happier and a pleasanter companion than a stockbroker. Much as I hated the profession, I preferred the soldier.

In five months our destinies underwent a new change. Wilfred was promoted to lieutenant and transferred to the Rifle Brigade. And I suddenly realized that my great desire was going to be fulfilled, another child was on the way.

In May, 1915, he sailed for France with his battalion, and for four months we neither of us let pass a day without writing to one another. In August, I took Margaret to the Sheridan home, and Wilfred came back on leave for a week, hoping to arrive for the birth of the child.

We talked a great deal about the War. He knew of the impending attack which subsequently was the Battle of Loos. He drew diagrams on the sand to make me understand the position of the battle fronts. He seemed extraordinarily interested in the technical side; moreover, he loved his men and appeared in every way to be a keen soldier. Perhaps it was the Irish blood in him as well as a violent reaction against the life he had been forced into. One can imagine how hateful that had been if even war in the trenches was better in comparison! His firm, of which he was still a partner and in which he had placed all his hard-earned savings, was already on the verge of bankruptcy. He saw the end of that life, and the futility of it, but he was young enough still to discount his loss. He promised that if he survived he would not return to the City, but rather would he go to Canada and try something new. But, what was the use of planning? He was sure that for him there would be no "after the war."

"If I am killed"—and he knew he would be—"have you faced what you will do?"

"I never face anything until it faces me," I answered.

In the village church he selected the place for his memorial, and then when time was up I accompanied him across the garden. He would not let me take him to the station, so we said good-bye at the gate, shook hands and parted. Those war days were so tense one seemed too heroic to be human, it was like playing a set part in a great company of actors. Sometimes it was a big part, sometimes it was insignificant, but all the time it was the part that others had just played and were going to play. And no one stood up in revolt or said, "My God, we won't stand any more of this!" No one questioned whether the play could be acted in any other way and, because mass opinion obliterates individual opinion, those whom we loved we urged on to the slaughter. And it was considered right and moral and we took unto ourselves all the airs of heroism for doing so. It was lawful that men should die in this way, but suicide still remains unlawful! How absurd we must seem in the eyes of the gods!

VI

During the ensuing weeks there was a fearful tension. The attack that Wilfred had predicted created in all our hearts a sense of deep foreboding. What if this unborn child were destined to be posthumous, and proved to be yet another girl?

Fortune tellers had predicted since I was seventeen the age at which I should be widowed. I reached that age on September 9th, 1915. On the 20th of the same month, towards the end of the day, Richard Brinsley (Dick) was born. Drugged with chloroform, I awoke gradually to a dazed consciousness of the autumn evening, the wide open windows and the sound of joy-bells pealing merrily from the church tower across the river. By that sound I knew a son had been born to me.

Then I was shown a large, blue-eyed blond Briton, who looked at me in a critical, comprehending and assertive way. It was a great moment.

For several days congratulatory telegrams and letters came pouring in, contrasting vividly with the silence that had accompanied the births of daughters. Every day for nine days I wrote to Wilfred, describing Dick, his looks, his size, his future, our hopes. He wrote back a hurried pencil scrawl in answer to the first to say how glad he was that Dick was born, but it was the eve of the long-planned battle, already they were under marching orders, there was no time for more: "The men are singing their way down the street, and I must follow." . . . After that a blank.

My mother-in-law, ashen, white-haired, frail and ghostlike in her white dressing-gown, sat by my bedside day after day and answered my enquiries evasively. There was no letter, there had been a battle, she admitted, and the posts were still disorganized. Her heroism was magnificent, her courage during those days when she hid from me—until I had regained strength—the news that he was "missing."

Finally the telegrams of condolence (from all those who so few days before had sent congratulations) began to pour in, and she was obliged to admit the truth. The church bells that had pealed so joyfully now tolled dolefully, and a batch of letters that I had addressed to Wilfred came back to me, "killed in action" scrawled in red pencil across the address. (These lie unopened in a drawer for Dick some day to open.)

In his writing desk we found a letter addressed to me, written before he left for France. He said:

"You will only read this if I am dead, and remember that as you read it I shall be by your side: you will know that I shall be saying to you—'Now pull yourself together.' There is nothing to cry about, only is there a great happiness in that he did not fail and that he has done the big thing; he has got into his eleven; he has won his colours; it is up to me to be proud of him and glad for him and not to weep. My head is up, my chin is out and I take my step forward into my new existence conscious that he is watching and approving.

"Remember that all over England are broken hearts and ruined lives, remember that one splendid woman, such as you are, refusing to weep, and hugging her soul with pride at a soldier's death, will consciously or unconsciously stiffen up and bring comfort to these.

"Remember also that my death is only an iota and that others have died and will die as I have done. Only by your strength and power can you gain me distinction and cover me with glory. No one is to wear mourning and if they hold a memorial service I want it to be helpful and not 'morne.' The war march of the priests from 'Athalie'—no dead march, and jolly (!) hymns.

"God keep you and help you and bring my little Margaret up happily.

"I can leave you nothing, darling, except the memory of years, and you know what our life together has been. Surely if perfection is attained we have attained it."

PART FOUR

WIDOWHOOD

I

BEFORE I HAD REGAINED THE strength to leave my child-bed I knew that I had nothing to live on but a widow's pension. I had no marriage settlement, for we had gambled on our luck when we married—gambled, and lost! Wilfred's firm was bankrupt. His parents like mine were old and accustomed to live upon (or beyond) their fixed incomes. Already they were feeling the burden of the new severe taxation and of the high cost of living. My father and mother at the time of my widowhood were straining every effort to provide for my eldest brother's wife and child while he was at the war. They could shoulder with difficulty the added burden of an extra nursery and the return on to their hands of the daughter whom it had been their long-cherished hope to see safely and prosperously married.

My father wrote for help to my father-in-law. He replied from his eleven thousand acre fastness that he could do "nothing whatever for poor darling Clare"!

Of what avail recriminations? It were more seemly to set to work to try and earn. This, however, I could not immediately attempt. My baby was still dependent upon me, and Leonie Leslie eliminated all further speculation as to the future by carrying me and my nursery off to Ireland. There I remained six unforgettable months in peace and harmony, loved, sheltered, hemmed in from the outside world, all anxiety alleviated whilst I gave myself wholly to Dick's start in life.

Leonie was also in a spiritually bruised condition owing to the death of Norman. He had been more than a son, he was her best friend as well; he had enveloped her in love, admiration and appreciation. Now, she slept with his sword in her bed, and put little bunches of fresh flowers in his empty bedroom. Oh, those heroic mothers of the War! Those sublime heartbroken mothers!

The death of Norman automatically brought back to Shane the inheritance which he had resigned in his favour. Shane had abandoned his project of taking Holy Orders; his health was broken with fasting and privation, but his religious asceticism remained with its super-sensitive and ultra-emotional attributes. He felt the necessity of doing something in the War, but not of killing. He joined a Red Cross contingent that was engaged in gathering up the wounded from the front lines under shell-fire. He saw the bloody massacre, the suffering, the martyrdom. He saw men go mad with pain and cry for death whom death awaited, and he went mad seeing their pain. He was removed from the scene and sent "far from the sound of war" to the United States to reconstruct his shattered nerves.

For Leonie and me Glaslough was full of ghosts. Memories of the absent Shane still haunted the upper attic, and his spirit was in the autumn woods. There were memories of all those who had been children and had been happy there. There were also the ghosts of Norman and Wilfred, who shadowed us everywhere.

Wilfred was particularly close to me at night. I knew that when Margaret and Dick and I were released while our bodies slept, we joined him and Elizabeth on another plane. One early dawn, Margaret, who slept in my room, shouted in her sleep: "Mummie, Mummie, can't Daddy come too?" by which I supposed that we were about to say good-bye for another day and she wanted him to stay with us. Another time she said to me:

"I saw Daddy last night—I had my eyes wide open in the dark and saw him. His badge [the silver cap badge of the Rifle Brigade] *was* bright, and my word it *did* glitter! I often have those 'tunelly' dreams."

I asked her what is a "tunelly dream"? and she explained simply: "When it's all dark, like a tunnel!"

Every morning she talked about him when we went hand-in-hand hunting for primroses, and looking for bulb noses pushing through the soil. Then once she said:

"We *have* had a happy morning—you *do* like flowers, don't you, Mummie? It makes you think of Daddy—he's helping God to grow them this year, that's why they're so early."

That is the way Wilfred would have wished to be remembered. Although he went out in the heat of battle, his baby remembered him in the spring flowers.

II

The first year of my widowhood was spent in visiting those of my friends who invited me, with my two babies, a nurse and perambulator, to stay. After a few such months of wandering I settled with my parents in a small house in Regent's Park. The congestion was awkward and after a while irritating. The nursery seemed to take up all the room, and we fitted ourselves as best we could into recesses. I took the habit of going out and staying out, because there was no room to stay in, and when the opportunity offered I accepted remarriage as the only solution of the future.

I did not pretend my heart was in it, but he was so young, so ingenuous, and he played so charmingly with the children on the nursery floor, that I was maternally drawn towards him. After this engagement, of which I saw the absurdity, I was almost ashamed to inform my parents, but to my surprise it was received by them with great satisfaction. "The boy" showered me with presents. A Daimler limousine outside the front door awaited my pleasure at all hours, and because we could not talk together—for there was nothing except motors he could talk about—we sallied forth to while away the tedium in buying things. He would cheerfully slap his left chest which bulged with an over-full pocket-book and declare that he had five hundred pounds to spend on me that day. It was as if a fairy having allowed one a single wish to be fulfilled, one had chosen to be rich! Many would make the same choice. I had so often thought what fun it would be if one could go into a shop and just buy anything one wanted. It is worth while to have done this in order to know how quickly the fascination can wear off and how sick of spending one can become.

I regard this humiliating experience as among some of the most valuable of my collection. It saved me in the end much vain wishing and futile envying.

After some weeks there was no room in our small house to contain the things he gave me, nor any room in my cupboards. Ornaments overflowed, clothes, furs, bric-à-brac, were given away to friends, to anyone who happened to be at hand. The sight of a motor nauseated me. I longed to walk, to stretch my limbs and breathe in God's air, albeit London air. A closed motor and stuffy shops had done their worst. Headaches and a sore throat became chronic. The more ill I felt, the less I desired to see "the boy" and when he got impatient I got angry.

My father's observant eye noted with anxiety my ever-increasing disinclination. I grew daily more conscious of the lamentable and unheroic figure I presented. It is one thing to be a war widow with a war baby arousing general sympathy and admiration, another to appear to be a worldly woman snatching a boy with a fortune. I found that the friends I valued were fading from me and a new kind was taking their place. The substitutes were not the sort I cared for. Would my life be filled with this type and would the worth-while ones be lost for ever?

My father tried to persuade me. He said I was doing the right thing for my children's sake, that I would make a "man" of "the boy." I answered I was not interested enough to make a man of him; besides, I had a son to make a man of! Then my father got angry and tried to force my hand. He said that I and my children cost more to keep than my widow's pension contributed, and that he could ill afford to keep us. I felt myself caught between the devil and the deep sea, impossible to decide which was the more odious, to marry or not to marry. The result was a nervous breakdown, and for some weeks a hospital nurse slept in my room.

When I got better I consulted a great friend, whose austerity of life and uncompromising directness rendered him almost fearful. I have known one or two transcendent idealists, and Sir Matthew Nathan is one of them. He told me in his deep voice (the deepest I have ever heard) that marriage unless one cares is unthinkable, detestable, and that nothing can justify it. My children didn't need any of the things I regarded as so important, and though he could not specify what we should do instead, he dismissed the problem of the future as insignificant. We would "get on all right," he said; it was absurd to suppose that anyone who was intelligent, educated and healthy should be in want. He so cheered and strengthened me that I went away to recuperate by the sea and made up my mind to strike out independently and to resist making a *mariage de convenance.*

"The boy" threatened to commit suicide, but ten days later he was engaged and shortly after married to another.

PART FIVE

LIFE AS AN ANARCHIST

I

I FOUND A STUDIO IN AN OBscure alley that joined Park Road to Queen's Terrace. There was only one other studio in that alley besides my own, and it was opposite and belonged to a painter who was deaf. The first time that she came to see me, my aunt, Jennie Churchill, remarked, "One might be murdered in this alley," which did little to assuage my nervousness, of which, however, I said nothing. In my mother's opinion I was not likely to "stick it out for a fortnight." She expected then to see me return humbly home.

My father refused to visit me, he had no curiosity as to where or how I lived. He referred to my modelling as "mud-puddling," and my effort to earn he called "cadging for fivers." I was only too sensitive about those fivers, but I tried to remember that everyone has to begin small in order to end big, and I looked forward confidently to a time when the "cadging" would be for hundreds. Meanwhile no one believed in me, only I myself.

It is true that the alley I lived in was a sinister place, but just where my studio stood it widened out, so that I had about a yard of garden before my door and a fig tree closed in by a railing. The face of my studio was hidden by festooning Virginia creeper, and a jasmine climbed up to a little iron balcony belonging to the only room that formed the upper story.

I painted my front door emerald green, ate my breakfast (in summer) under the fig tree, planted pansies in the border, noted with pride one honey bee and one white butterfly hovering over the jasmine and, that they might not escape, I closed the garden gate behind me whenever I went out.

The studio itself was exceedingly big. Black beams supported the roof. Next to it was a tiny kitchen and two microscopic rooms. A little wooden stair led up to the room that boasted the balcony. From this long window one looked over the opposite wall, and two tall poplars blocked out the further view of roofs. It was one of those little hidden quiet corners, almost Latin in atmosphere, that do exist so surprisingly in the heart of London. I thought it a most peaceful and harmonious place.

A sympathetic and understanding maid cooked for me, "did" for me and rendered herself invaluable. Life had never appeared so serene, so simplified nor so cheap. I ate little and she ate the rest. I worked all day, and in the evening I walked to my parents' house and had tea and stayed with the children until they were in bed. As I was now a visitor the children behaved their best and sweetest and rivalled one another for my favours. I remember that Margaret used to go up to bed first although the elder, and Dick would be left alone with me "for ten minutes"—our great game was to sit on the floor before the fire, very close to one another, and look for pictures in the glowing coals. Always we described the same picture, it was the "little house that Mummie and Dicky and Teeta (sister) will live in some day together."

My father adored the children and expressed himself delighted to have them in the house. Had I not had this home for them I should have been in a sad predicament, but having the burden of them taken from my shoulders, I was enabled to make the great first effort of starting to work.

Those early days are confused in my mind; I was doing two things with all my might, studying and earning. Part of the day I set aside, beginning in the early morning, for certain decorative work that I succeeded in placing with one or two shops. These were in the nature of fruit-garlanded frames, and terra-cotta pots painted, book blocks modelled from Dick, and some plaques in relief. The demand exceeded my capacity for turning them out. It was unmeritorious work and a waste of time, but it served its purpose by keeping the pot boiling, for which I was thankful. I now began to know my fellow artists living in the vicinity, and we wandered about the streets in our work overalls, visiting one another's studios, looking at each other's work, advising, criticizing and discussing. Someone advised me to work in the night school at Aldwych. The school (if I remember right) was endowed and therefore gratis. I jumped at this opportunity and at the end of a weary day, capped by my visit to the children, I put sandwiches in my pocket and started for Aldwych in the Underground.

Gilbert Bayes was a teacher at the school, and knowing his work I was glad to know him. He was charming and sympathetic and helpful, but I did not get on. Either I was too tired or else I cannot work in a school. Be that as it may, I hated the model, I could not interest myself in the theme, and I found that instead of looking forward to my evenings, they became more and more dreaded and irksome. For some time I forced myself, thinking it must be good for one to do the things which are not easy or pleasant. But when I proved that my effort was vain and that I did not get on, I gave it up. Instead, I accepted the invitation of John Tweed to work in his studio.

John Tweed, who was a friend of most of my friends, I had known for some little time. He was a pupil of Rodin and could do fine work when it was work that inspired or interested him. A temperamental genius, oppressed like most artists by the necessity of money, and obliged therefore to accept orders that were almost suicidally distasteful to him. His studio was encumbered at odd times, first by a gigantic equestrian of Sir George White (whose name had faded from significance by the time it was finished), then by a super life-sized Lord Clive which now stands before the India Office, and later a Joseph Chamberlain in a frock coat. Maybe I remember Kitchener on a horse. "Why do you do it?" I asked him. And his answer—a groan.

John was, in some ways, a madman. His work and his life drove him mad. He knew what good work could be; the severest critic of others, he could criticize himself also, and he knew there were other ways of working, but not in England. He could not choose, however, a family depended on him. His moods were violent. He was as ready to kill as to love; to curse as to kiss; to blame as to praise. He could be tender and childlike, or he could throw a hammer at one's head. That was the atmosphere in which I worked.

Once, when I brought a little figurine of Margaret for his judgment, he exclaimed enthusiastically (rare for him):

"Clare, you're a genius!"

He seemed to approve also of a little wax head of the Crewe baby, but when I worked under his eye he paralysed me with his scorn and whatever might be well begun was always ill ended. He would glower at me and demand:

"Where is the plumb line?" And I meekly:

"I didn't use a plumb line."

He gruffly: "How do you expect to get anything straight without using a plumb line?"

"I can tell by my eye."

"How can your eye tell you whether that head is in line with the left leg?"

"I know it is." I dodged the plumb which he threw at me.

"Prove it!"

I fumbled with the plumb line and he turned his back. When he looked again everything was changed, wrong, out of proportion.

"What have you done?"

"I've used the plumb line."

We glowered at one another, he like a dog that is going to spring, I like a cat that's going to fly. Discouraged and angry I'd fling my day's work on to the floor and flatten it. Then over a cup of tea, sitting on the dusty model-stand amid the sticky remains of our sardine and cheese lunch, he would talk to me about Art, and the uphill work of it, and the heartbreak and the joy of it, and the eternal dissatisfaction with oneself and the desire to attain the unattainable. We would discuss projects, stimulate one another to renewed efforts, and I would go home tired, having accomplished nothing, but with a great happiness, a kind of reawakening to a new life.

II

This jangled atmosphere was suddenly transformed one day by an unexpected arrival. In answer to a knock I opened the door, and was confronted by what looked to me like one of Christ's disciples: it was Professor Lanteri, and he stood shyly and hesitating on the threshold. His presence was the occasion of a "down tools" interval, and Tweed was more amiable than was usual when he was interrupted.

A visit from Lanteri was a rare event. He was a timid sensitive personality, for whom ugliness and hardness were real pain, and so to avoid hurt he lived secludedly in himself. After a contemplative interval he invited me to go and work in his studio at the South Kensington College of Art; it was an astonishing suggestion and recalled to my mind a long-cherished dream, and the scornful assertion of a friend who had intimated that Professor Lanteri would disdain to teach me!

Tweed, half regretfully, said it was a good idea; and so it happened that I transferred to Lanteri's studio.

In this new environment work was much easier. Lanteri was as calm as Tweed was tempestuous, as encouraging as Tweed was scornful, as patient as Tweed was uncontrolled; but although the calm one was the better teacher the volcanic one was the greater artist.

Tweed often joined us at a little Italian eating-house at the lunch hour, and the two would "reminis'e" over their *beaux-arts* days and early life in London; Lanteri recalled his contemporaries and friends, Corot, Dalou, Legros, Falguières, Boehm, Rodin, etc.; "and do you remember," he said, "that party Whistler gave for Rodin? and how peevishly he turned all his pictures with their faces to the wall?"

All during those months, when I worked with him, he knew little if anything about me, I doubt if he knew even my name. He treated me as a struggling student, and would not let me pay for my lessons; nothing except work was of the slightest import. One day, however, to my surprise, for he had always been most impersonal, he asked me if I meant ever to marry again. He went on to explain that many of his best pupils were women, but that when they got married that was the end.

"If you think you will get married you must tell me, for it is useless that I should take an interest in you ——"

My answer satisfied him. He gave up an August holiday to enable me to continue my studies uninterruptedly.

My friends now began to be interested. Some of them offered to sit for me. Princess Patricia, Diana Manners, Hazel Lavery, Gladys Cooper, and the twenty-year-old airman, Colonel Bishop, V.C. Lanteri said I could and must do them. He helped me with the statuette of Princess Patricia, with the result that with four others it was accepted by the National Portrait Society's exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery.

Then the Canadian War Museum bought the bust of "Billy" Bishop. I felt encouraged, but I was running before I could walk. Orders came pressing in and I had to give up working in Lanteri's studio to work in my own. My sitters became my models, and my commissions were almost studies. Reid Dick, my neighbour, who has since become an A.R.A., came and helped with his criticism whenever I appealed to him. My fellow artists were generous. I learnt more from them than by working in a school. Tweed, however, remarked contemptuously one day that if I was content to get commissions and please sitters I might make money but I would not learn much: "I suppose money comes before all else," he said scornfully.

"It does," I admitted; "I cannot afford to be a student." When he had gone I wrote upon my wall the words of George MacDonald, "*I know that good is coming to me, that good is always coming,*" and I hung a picture over it so that none should see, and I resolutely determined not to be discouraged.

My great ambition was to study with Epstein, but these were war days, and Epstein was suffering all the tortures that only an artist can, who lives for creative work and is suddenly seized and pushed into uniform and ordered to drill. He didn't want to drill, and he didn't want to kill, and he nearly went mad in a barrack life among men who certainly took him for a lunatic. His friends tried to intervene for his release, but there was a kind of malicious tenacity on the part of officials who perhaps disliked his work as much as his race. They said that as he had adopted British citizenship he must fight for it, protect it, serve it, do his duty in fact as an Englishman. They denied him the privilege that was Orpen's and Augustus John's, of masquerading in uniforms the while they made portraits of generals behind the lines.

It was not until after the armistice that I was able to realize my project, and as I was too shy to ask him to let me work with him I contrived the matter in another way. Someone asked me to choose my own Christmas present: I asked for my portrait by Epstein.

III

During two or three weeks, for several hours a day, I watched him and I learnt.

Those days are unforgettable. Epstein at work was a being transformed. Not only his method was interesting and valuable to watch, but the man himself, his movement, his stooping and bending, his leaping back, poised, and then rushing forward, his trick of passing clay from one hand to the other over the top of his head while he scrutinized his work from all angles, was the equivalent of a dance. It might easily have been converted into a ballet by Diaghilieff and called the dance of the sculptor.

He wore a butcher-blue tunic and his black curly hair stood on end; he was beautiful when he worked. Then I learnt the thing which has counted supremely for me ever since (other sculptors may scoff)—he did not model with his fingers, he built up his planes slowly by means of small pieces of clay applied with a flat, pliant wooden tool. He told me that he could not understand how other sculptors could work with their fingers, which with him merely left shiny fingerprints on the surfaces. This was identically what I had always suffered from, the shiny smooth result of my finger touch. It had exasperated and perplexed me. No one had ever seemed to complain of it, but at last here was someone who did. It is his method of building up that gives Epstein's surfaces their vibrating and pulsating quality of flesh. I cannot theorize about sculpture; in my opinion sculpture can only be seen and felt, it cannot be explained. At all events during those days I realized and learnt to appreciate Epstein's sincerity. It is easy to seem to be sincere when your work has a popular appeal and brings you in remunerative orders, but Epstein, though he needed orders, would not sink to the level of compromise. He would starve if need be, but he would be himself.

Without his ever suspecting it, I acquired from merely watching him knowledge that revolutionized my work. Whatever I have done of merit dates since that time. Everything I did before was valueless. Epstein (I call him "maestro" in all diffidence and humility) has probably aroused more rage and indignation, more perplexity and praise, than any sculptor in history. Few understand him. He has chosen deliberately to live in a country where sculpture is an unknown art, where it is misrepresented, misinterpreted and misunderstood. And so long as British sculptors are relegated to the ranks of memorial carvers the art cannot progress nor deviate from its present lines.

IV

It must not be supposed that because I had orders I was in a state of affluence. The "fivers" that my father had so contemptuously referred to had indeed turned into something more, but usually not more than twenty-fives or fifties, which left little enough margin above the cost of production. My annual income, apart from my earnings, was £250, of which seventy pounds went to the children's nurse, fifty for my studio and fifty to my studio maid, leaving a balance of eighty for my food and for my clothes and the children's. This required untiring effort to supplement. There were moments when an overdraft at the bank necessitated the selling of something quickly: Wilfred's library, his collection of old English prints, his Staffordshire china cottages (the largest collection in England) and our wedding present silver all went in turn.

Not only were the work orders insufficiently paid, but some of the worth-while ones that promised adequate remuneration miscarried and left one stranded disconcertingly. For instance, a reputedly wealthy woman was introduced by a mutual friend, who gave me an order to do the head of her little girl. The price was agreed upon for bronze. When the clay was finished and the mother came to see it she was so pleased that she decided to have it carved in marble. A bronze cast would have taken a month. The marble carving took three. By which time the child's parents were divorcing. I could get no answer either from the one or the other; I was left with the marble on my hands for which the cost of the material only had been paid. I could not sell the head, for it was a grimacing little child, a real portrait, that no one would care to own in the abstract.

On another occasion the life-sized half-figure in a great block of marble of a very beautiful woman occupied months of my time and remained ponderously on my hands, again with only the cost of material paid. My beautiful sitter never married the man who was supposed to pay! All my hours of work went unrewarded. I would have given it to her rather than have the portrait wasted, for it was a good likeness and she was very charming, but she disappeared into the void, and so after long waiting I finally presented it to my sister-in-law's husband Colonel Hall-Walker (now Lord Wavertree) in repayment for a debt.

There occurred another incident which cannot go unmentioned. A rich Cabinet Minister asked me to do the head of his child. He said the advertisement should suffice in lieu of payment, for she would shortly be coming "out," and would be very well known in society. He was sorry he could not afford to pay, but he had only ten thousand a year! And because I exclaimed, he added that he had three children to bring up. I pointed out that I had to bring up two children on two hundred and fifty. He waved my contention aside—everything depended, he said, on how one was accustomed to live. War taxes had reduced his income to this level, and he found it not easily readaptable.

As the few who paid were out of all proportion to those who did not, the struggle to live did not grow easier. My studio was full of work and made a great effect of success and prosperity, but it was a mere delusion. The "dud" patrons, however, afforded me the opportunity to study and saved me the expense of paying models. They brought me some slight advertisement besides, and from this point of view they were worth while.

Meanwhile, for the sake of my food expenses "pot-boiling" had to be assiduously continued. These I grew more and more to hate, for they took me away from my real work. My studio got so congested with paints and varnish and smelly, messy mediums required for coloured plaster decoration, that I had to rent a small studio next door for this work only. At six every morning I was at work, trying to complete orders for shops, and to be free for the hours when sitters would call. I seldom went out, and once when Perceval Landon came to see me at the end of a day, he remarked that I seemed to have a film over my eyes from tiredness. Sometimes I threw myself full length on the wooden floor and slept from sheer exhaustion. To be tired from overwork and not tired from boredom was new to me and I enjoyed it.

An indefinite prolongation of these conditions, however, might have broken one's spirit and paralysed ambition, but Providence, in the guise of an American colonel, altered the conditions of my life.

He was on leave, and something about me touched his American heart. I thought (if I thought about myself at all, which was rare for I was too busy) that I appeared rather successful and triumphant, but the American saw in me a War victim. It affected him deeply; he came to see me again on his second leave. I was pot-boiling in my studio annex, and came forth to greet him covered in paint. He insisted on seeing what I was doing. He said very little, indeed there was nothing to say, but he came back the next day just when I was leaving in a great hurry to visit the children at tea-time, and he came too.

Again he said very little, and because he had a quiet manner Dick showed him some of his toys and initiated him into their intricate working, and Margaret set him to act the part of King Alfred and the cakes so that she might have the pleasure of scolding him. The fourth time the American came to see me, he came to take me out to dinner. He had a car, and as we sped westwards from St. John's Wood, he said:

"I've been thinking it over. You know you've got some talent that is as good as capital, but if you waste your time in the other studio you're just fooling. You're letting your capital go to waste. Now I guess when your husband went off to France he counted on those who are left to see you through. And so I want you to let me give you a thousand pounds to make life easier," and he handed me ten notes of a hundred.

I said all the things one says on such an occasion. I stammered in my astonishment that I didn't need it and wouldn't take it, and he countered with a question:

"What is the exact amount of your bank balance at this moment?"

I had six pounds; it was more than I often had.

"Six pounds!" he repeated, "and where will you be in six days?"

"It will last longer than that," I said, and explained that I was owed various amounts which would come in, and meanwhile I could hold on.

Well, he was not having any "pride stuff" as he called it, and I had to give way, and mighty glad I was too. But he stipulated that I must close down my "pot-boiler shed" and concentrate on the other work. This I did, and never worked for shops from that day. Moreover, I paid some debts, mended my roof which leaked, bought the children's winter vests and lived in great calm and peace of mind for some time. In return the American asked to be allowed to give me dinner when I had finished work, and when we had seen every play in London, which after a long day's work was very fatiguing, but the only way I could repay him, he went back to France. His periodic returns on leave punctuated the flight of time. He was without exception the most chivalrous man I ever met. He regarded me as a kind of heritage left to the nation by a dead patriot, and considered it a sacred duty that such as I should be looked after. Cynics may smile, but because such a man did once cross my path, I can never feel cynically about life. I appreciate kindness above all other qualities. It may be easy to give when one is rich, but how few do it! Besides it is not so much the gift as the method of giving. To give kindly, to give thoughtfully, to give generously and to give disinterestedly surely savours of Heaven!

V

This generous act on the part of the American released me as it was meant to, for study.

I obtained permission from the head of St. Dunstan's to have a blind soldier model. He was an Australian who had attracted my attention in Regent's Park by the way he walked alone, with his head high and an inspired expression on his face. He was beautiful and resigned and patient. Tears streamed down my face as I worked, but it did not matter as he did not know. After him a South African, who had a permanent bandage because not only his eyes but the lower part of his brow had been blown away. He was even more tragic if possible than the Australian. When I fetched him from St. Dunstan's and brought him back in a bus the people inside would rise and offer their places. If only he could have seen the effect he created! How the moment people saw him their faces became transfused with compassion and respect. They desired to do something for him, as if to serve him were a privilege.

My own reactions, recalled in the cold calm perspective of after years, seem hysterically emotional. Intensely conflicting feelings arose in me concerning God, whom I had always believed in, and a fierce resentment against war. It mattered little whether the man were South African or English, a German or a Turk, it would have aroused in me the same feeling of revolt.

This victim of world injustice, however, was sublime in the simple acceptance of his fate. All the while he sat we talked. I heard about his life and the prospects of his future. There was a V.A.D. at St. Dunstan's, a lady no longer young, with a small private income, whose desire was to dedicate her life to this blind colonial private. He was perplexed and undecided, he dreamed of romance and loving and caring. He was proud too, and had no wish to be kept by a compassionate wife, and yet he was touched. So we debated the question in all its aspects. I shall never forget how he proudly produced a photograph of himself "to show how I looked with my eyes." I beheld a charming young smiling face, and the eyes of the photograph looked at one laughingly. Once with a puzzled introspective look he said:

"I know very nearly what you look like. I know you are tall because your voice comes from high up. I know you are young by the sound of your walk. I know you are strong by the way you take my arm and lead me. I know you are fair because—well, because I am sure you are fair! But there is just one thing that puzzles me, I cannot imagine how you do your hair."

I went close to him and said, "Feel."

His hands encircled my head, he touched my hair and outlined it in his mind.

"Ah, it's short!" he exclaimed. "I never guessed it was short." And then in a tone of satisfaction, "I have seen you now."

He married his V.A.D. God bless them both. May they be happy to the end, the one in sublimely giving, the other in beautifully accepting this dedication to a life martyred for an abstract duty.

VI

My passionate pacifism, which was born of fear for Dick's future, and stimulated by these War incidents, prompted me to write one day to H. G. Wells concerning an article of his on education. I thought I could get some direction from him, for my family were far from helpful or sympathetic concerning my views. I added in my letter that our mutual and most beloved friend, Henry James, had long ago refused to introduce us. H.G. accepted an invitation to lunch. We met in the street outside the Underground station as I was hurrying back to my studio to receive him. That is to say, a stranger waylaid me and asked: "Is this the way to St. John's Wood Studios?" and I answered, "Yes. Are you Mr. H. G. Wells?" We both laughed to hide a slight embarrassment, and our friendship of a more or less capricious and uncertain order dates from that date. (I remember that we talked of many things but we forgot all about my son's education.)

He came quite often after that and remained sometimes the whole afternoon playing the orchestrelle organ while I worked.

I asked him once to let me do a head of him. His reply was quick, concise, conditional, Wells-ish. The project had to be abandoned. I said to him reprovingly:

"If only men would set ideals for us to live up to, instead of always a standard to live down to," and I quoted—" '*For God's sake be as beautiful as that white form that dwelleth in my heart!*'—if only men would ask that of us!"

H.G. laughed in his *moqueur* way and alluded to the white form with "a big black picture hat," that dwelt in his heart, and then dismissed the "white form" attitude. He urged instead, his own code: "It is better to be awake than asleep; it is better to be alive than dead; it is better to be active than passive." He was a cheerful and witty companion, but I never could get him to discuss anything with me seriously. Once he asked me to lunch with him and Arnold Bennett. It was an illuminating occasion. What the one did not reveal about the other's private life was hardly worth knowing. They talked *to* each other, but *at* me! The theme was Love. H.G. said that the "cut-your-throat-suicide-desperate love" type was *démodé*. It was also wrong. Love ought to be preserved in its right place and in a right proportion.

Bennett said that love ought not to be allowed to weigh heavy as a burden, and he gave an example of how love should be adapted to life. He, for instance, did not live with his wife. That is to say he sometimes went to see her, sometimes he stayed with her, but habitually he lived at his club. After ten years of this relationship they were naturally the best of friends. He said that hardly a week ago he met her by chance in Piccadilly, and she said:

"I was just thinking of asking you to dine to-morrow night; I've got some people coming I think might interest you." After hearing who they were he consulted his engagement book and decided he could. *That*, he said, was the art of life—the art of married life!

There may not be a word of truth in what he related, he may have invented it to illustrate his theory; but I have often wished it were true, and I have even said that if . . . (but I find it is not a popular conception of married relationship)!

VII

At this time a new interest evolved for me owing to a series of commissions from Captain Freddy Guest. He was collecting the heads of modern celebrities who happened to be his friends. Winston Churchill, Birkenhead, Reading, Beaverbrook, etc. I did not succeed, however, in securing them all. Lord Beaverbrook, one of the best heads of all from a sculptor's point of view, refused point blank. Lord Reading was on the brink of leaving for India and was not interested. (This pursuit of heads lays one open to refusals and snubs, such as the newspaper reporter experiences when he asks for an interview!) Winston was an obvious victim; he could not refuse, especially as he was Freddy Guest's cousin and temporarily living in his house at Roehampton. There I spent a great many week-ends. Birkenhead completed the trio of "inseparables." Winston, who had taken to painting, had converted a north room into a studio. I worked alternately on the heads of Winston and Freddy. Birkenhead, who had been painted by every artist in London, was self-appointed critic. Sometimes McEvoy joined the party and would try to paint Winston while Winston painted me, and I modelled him. Not one would keep still for the other, and it was small wonder that no one got very far. Of all the portraits I have ever done Winston's was the hardest, not because his face was difficult, but because it was for him a physical impossibility to sit still. He said it was his only day in the week to paint, and so I waited, I watched, I snatched moments, I did and undid and re-did, at times in despair. Freddy would come in, beseech him to "give her a chance—it's for me, Winston!" and Winston would be contrite and promise, and say he was sorry, and that he knew it was hard on me, and he would sit compassionately for three minutes and then begin to fidget. Not only would he not keep still for me, but more usually he expected me to keep still for him! Once, a secretary arrived from the War Office with a locked despatch box. He stood there, but Winston went on painting, neither seeing nor hearing. For some time the secretary watched us both, I looked at him, wondering what he thought, and saw that he was smiling.

Now and then Winston remembering me, and that I was trying to portray him, would stop still and face me with all the intensity with which he had been painting. These were my momentary chances which he called sittings! Then as the day faded he abandoned whatever he was at work on and turned excitedly to the window to paint the sunset. His canvas had been prepared, the cedar tree in the foreground was already painted, he went straight for the colour. On one of these occasions he said to me, without looking round:

"Sometimes—I could *almost* give up everything for it!"

I am convinced that had he from the first put all his colossal energy and brain into art instead of politics, he would have been very great and would have something more tangible than a mere repute to leave behind him. But power is more dear to the heart of man than all else—power over the destinies of men and nations! Regardless of the fact that above all Fate rules supreme. The destinies of the British Empire must pursue their way, and in the end it will not make much difference whether Winston for a little while did or did not add his shoulder to the wheel.

The glory that was Greece lives through her art and not her politics.

But to return to that little north room at Templeton. Under such difficulties no one but myself would have attempted Winston's bust, but I liked him, I liked his head and I liked Freddy, who wished it done, so I patiently persevered. I have a theory also that artists miss great opportunities by insisting always on perfect conditions. Some of my most interesting heads and my best results are those which have led me through purgatory. As regards Winston my efforts were finally rewarded. Circumstances came to my rescue. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and Winston was cajoled and scolded and induced to give me a short sitting. I got him on to the revolving stand alongside his head of clay. He discovered he was near enough to touch it and began to model something on the shoulder. First he was interested; after a while he was absorbed; it seemed to affect him as it did me the first time I ever touched clay. He said:

"But you can do anything with it!"

At six o'clock one of his children came into the room and informed us that tea was ready, but at his own request *we* went on working! This was really the beginning and the end of Winston's "bust." I never got him to sit again and I did not need to. But when I went up to my room to dress for dinner I threw myself on the bed and lay almost comatose with exhaustion.

Those were great Sundays. All sorts of interesting people who came for the afternoon stayed for dinner, and either we danced after, or if he was in the mood, Winston would hold forth on some subject or other. Whatever he discussed he always did it forcefully, and even on subjects of which he knew nothing he brought new ideas to bear. He would, for instance, hold his own with John Lavery; he had theories about painting and analysed them. He had, in fact, more ideas on the subject than the professional painter. The one only knows *how* he paints, but Winston knows also *why* he paints! He produced a theory about brains, which, he said, could be put to any use in any channel. Given the brain-power, it was possible, he thought, to switch it on or off at will, as he did for instance from politics to painting, as Michael Angelo could from sculpture to poetry, and Leonardo da Vinci from painting to engineering. According to this theory any intellectual could become an artist. (The opposite, however, does not apply, for a talented artist may be quite a dull if not a stupid person!) He told me one evening as he leaned against the mantelpiece, after dinner, that:

"In my next incarnation (!) I mean to be a woman, I mean to be an artist, I shall be free, and I shall have children!!"

This was to impress upon me how fortunate I was. I did not need to be told so.

Meanwhile Birkenhead took a great deal of trouble to secure for me an order to do Mr. Asquith for the Oxford Union. He wrote to various Asquithian friends and old Oxford Unionites to contribute towards a fund for this purpose. For a desperately busy man (he was Lord Chancellor at the time) and one as impersonal as he usually appeared to be, I was greatly touched. I had known him ever since I was a girl, but it was only now that I learnt to appreciate the qualities that had endeared him to Winston for so many years.

Although sardonic in humour, intolerant, and an implacable enemy, he was capable of the most tender solicitude for his friends.

VIII

I had known Mr. Asquith before I married but in the interval of years we had lost touch. It required a good deal of persuasion on the part of Birkenhead to make him sit for me. He said that three famous artists had done him and failed, and he did not believe that I should do any better. Thus encouraged, I set to work and Mr. Asquith sat sulkily at first, his whole attitude being "Well, here I am—but it's quite useless."

If Winston had jibbed at sitting, at least he never seemed to doubt my capability. But harder than Winston's restlessness was Mr. Asquith's passive resistance and determined disbelief. If only people realized how their psychologic attitude reacts subconsciously on the artist, making the work either harder or easier! Mr. Asquith made it is hard as possible. I exhausted myself trying not only to make a promising start in order to dispel his pessimism, but at the same time endeavoring to entertain him so that he should become less rigid and more sympathetic. I do not think that most artists consider this sufficiently. They give themselves to the work only and care nothing for their sitters, with the result that "posing" has become a synonym for boredom.

I have always managed to preserve a dual interest in my clay and in my sitter. It is wearying, even maddening at times, but it pays in the end. To provoke them into talking, to say just the necessary word to keep the talk flowing and my sitter animated, is for me a subconscious necessity. For this reason I invariably get longer sittings than have been promised or intended. Naturally it was of vital importance to me to make a success of Asquith's head, not merely because in itself it was worth doing, and because Birkenhead's belief in me as a sculptor was at stake, but to have an Asquith of mine alongside the Gladstone and the Salisbury in the Oxford Union was an honour that required my highest effort. I believed in my power to do it if given a fair chance.

I was always acutely conscious of the fact that I had to *make good.* That is to say, I must work harder even than another in order to live down my lack of training, and the superficiality of my life before I became a sculptor. I could not under these circumstances give myself airs as other artists did. I must bear with the vagaries of my sitters and make the best of it. I required the success, above all I required the money. And I therefore exerted self-control, which was often tested to the utmost, patience and determination. I remember being very envious of McEvoy, because after he had made a first attempt at painting Winston he laid down his palette and brushes and said:

"It is hopeless!"

It was no more hopeless really for him than for me, but I *had* to do it and McEvoy did not have to. McEvoy had a queue of paying clients at his door, he could afford to toss his head. He was independent. He would doubtless have downed paint brushes and said, "It is hopeless!" if Mr. Asquith had met him in the frame of mind in which he met me. But I *had* to do him.

Asquith's attitude of cold compliance was surprising in an old friend, but in the end I won. Slowly, very slowly, he unbent. Little by little he became human. My efforts were gradually rewarded. As the bust grew he too grew more gracious. In the end I had to beg him to look at me as if he hated me. Impossible to have a *smiling* statesman in the Oxford Union.

"That," he answered, "is a look that is easy to summon but hard to preserve!"

If I remember right I mentioned the name of Winston and got the hard look that I wanted, though why, I have long since forgotten; it seemed explainable at the time. The bust at all events got finished. Even his wife grudgingly acknowledged the likeness. Above all, Birkenhead was pleased.

At the end of the "season" Colin Agnew came to see me, and offered me an exhibition for October in his Bond Street gallery. This seemed to be the crowning reward to all my efforts, the fulfilment of my most fantastic dreams. Life seemed to be evolving along a well-directed plan.

PART SIX

RUSSIA

I

THE PROSPECT OF AN EXHIBITION necessitated the finishing of certain work, and I was obliged to forgo the joy of August at Brede with the children, and remain in deserted London. The work I wished to finish was a statue of Victory. I had conceived it one day in a spirit of passionate protest after the blind soldier had left my studio. It was not a popular or traditional Victory, it was not the sort of Victory that anyone would wish to put up in a public place, but it was an expression of the feelings that I could not put into words.

During those August days in London I had four friends, forced like myself to remain and work. One was a Cabinet Minister,[1] another was a young man who danced exceedingly well. The third was Shane Leslie. The fourth a New Zealander called Fisher, and each of these played a definite part.

I chanced one evening to discuss with Fisher the heads of people I would like for my exhibition. I pointed out the photograph in that day's paper of the Russian Soviet trade delegate, Krassin, who had just arrived in London. Fisher volunteered to try and get him for me. He knew someone connected with the Russian Trading Company who might arrange it. The suggestion was rather vague and I did not give it another thought until a few days later Fisher rang me up and said he had arranged for a friend of his to take me to the Russian Soviet Office. Fisher thought it was rather an amusing venture—I had done so many types, why not add a Bolshevik to my collection?

The individual Russian revolutionaries were not known at this time, it was 1920, and little news except of the most murderous description had come across. One supposed the leaders were bloody-minded proletarians and the mere mention of them roused a shudder. I was insatiably interested, I loved Slavs, Slav music, Slav literature, Slav art and decoration, and had always, since childhood, been drawn to Russia. Peter and I used to read every Russian story we could lay hands on. Of all the people in the world, the Russians appealed to me as the most mystic, the most barbarous and the most romantic. My mind conjured up Nihilist plots, Siberian prisons, and troikas pursued by wolves, as if these were memories. It had always been my dream to go to Russia, a dream however, that seemed to have been rendered rather remote by the revolution.

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[1] Name suppressed by Publisher.

Fisher's friend, whom I never saw before or since, and I were kept waiting for some time in a small empty room into which young men with long hair and low-necked shirts burst occasionally, papers in hand, and left abruptly when they found us sitting there. There were young women too, with straight short hair and hard, set faces. I looked at them wonderingly, saying to myself, "These are Revolutionaries!" How romantic! I saw in all those young Russian men and women clerks, the Nihilist heroes of Tolstoi, Dostoyefski and Tourgeneff embodied and triumphant. "Virgin Soil" seemed to have reaped its harvest. *Solomin* and *Mariana* (with *Markelov* released from Siberia) were there, in front of me, papers in hand. The war, not their propaganda, had paved the way to revolution.

But what was Bolshevism? Tourgeneff never mentioned the word. *Mariana*, and all those poor young female clerks —were they not nationalized as our papers told us? No wonder their faces looked so hard. But *Solomin*—would he consent to this? *Would* he allow *Mariana* to be nationalized? And *Markelov*, had he revenged himself on *Sipiagin* by tying him down and placing starving rats under a flower pot on his bare stomach as we heard the Bolsheviks did? These were the thoughts that filled my mind in that interval of waiting. Finally we were ushered into the private office of Kameneff, the head delegate. He had a neatly trimmed beard and pince-nez, and an amiable smile. He might have been mistaken for a *bourgeois* French bank manager. I wondered whether he too was one of those who tortured his enemies with starving rats! He expressed his interest and the interest of the Soviet government in Art—(the interest of the Soviet government in ART—what a surprise!)—and offered to come to my studio and sit for me. We agreed on a day and on an hour; but it was not Kameneff, it was Krassin that I wanted. I saw him next, he was in a separate office. He seemed busier than Kameneff or more preoccupied. He was less interested, less amiable, less definite in his promise, and he had far the more interesting head of the two.

I came away with a very different impression of Russian revolutionaries than I had gone there with.

That night I dined at Claridge's with my dancing partner whose name—let us say—was "Melbourne"! He was surprisingly interested in the fact that I had made the acquaintance of the Russians. It might "lead to something," he seemed to think, though to what was not very clear in my mind. From that time on, during the whole of August, I saw Kameneff and Krassin every day, "Melbourne" continually, and Shane (who had Archbishop Mannix in his house, who had been forbidden to set foot in Ireland) came when Kameneff was sitting and entertained him with Irish rebel stories. The Cabinet Minister who also came (happily never without telephoning) did not know that I knew the Russians. I realized too well the indignation my knowing them would arouse, and kept it secret. Feeling was running high against the "Bolsheviks," and the best thing was to keep quiet about them.

Krassin had his family in London, but Kameneff was alone at an hotel. When he had finished work he used to ask me to show him London. I took him to the Tate Gallery and to Hampstead Heath. We spent a day at Hampton Court, and an evening on the river. By that time I had learned a good deal about the new Russian régime, its aims, its methods and the lies that were misrepresenting it abroad. I enjoyed these hours with Kameneff; he was cultured and had a goodly sense of humour. He brought a completely new point of view to bear on every subject. He accelerated my "breaking away from tradition" process to a breathless pace. He laughed at my prejudices, my illusions and my beliefs, and I began to laugh at myself.

Kameneff liked my work, he liked particularly my Victory and said it was the Victory of all the ages, and that it was the best peace propaganda he had seen. One day, while I was out, he called at the studio and left a bunch of red roses at its feet.

The political situation worried him. Wrangel was being subsidized by the British to maintain his attack in the Crimea, though why, even if he won the Crimea, it should affect Russia, and how he could hope to conciliate the whole country, is hopeless to conjecture. Winston was conspicuously urging a more definite intervention. Munitions were being shipped, until Labour got up and organized a "Hands off Russia!" protest, and the seamen went on strike. Into this political whirlpool I became suddenly drawn, who had lived so serenely apart in an atmosphere of art.

After a demonstration of the "Hands off Russia" in Trafalgar Square, "Melbourne" strangely enough asked me if I knew whether or not Kameneff had been there. I said that "we" mingled with the crowd, listened to Lansbury, and then made off to Hampton Court. But the eager interest of my dancing friend intrigued me. It seemed to me that Kameneff was being *watched*. I conjured up the Russian novels with all their secret plotting and spying. That such things should be possible in England seemed ridiculous, but fascinating. A Russian atmosphere began to pervade my studio; I felt myself beginning to be entangled in a web. Could it be true, or was it all a grotesque exaggeration of my imagination? "Melbourne," however, pursued the matter and every evening he rang me up to know how Kameneff had spent his day! It was of so little importance, that if "Melbourne" wanted to know why should he not? If Kameneff's movements must be reported it were better for him that I were substituted in the place of some importunate paid third-person.

The humour of the situation was complete when "Melbourne" invited Kameneff and me to spend a week-end at his house. Kameneff accepted. "Melbourne" escorted us. At the station I asked whether we should travel first or third! (I was still very ignorant of Bolshevik principles.) Kameneff laughed.

"First, of course! Don't you understand that we want to raise the world from a third to a first-class standard?"

"Melbourne" was charming, gracious, intelligent, liberal minded, without any violent prejudice, intensely interested in all that Kameneff had to tell.

Kameneff was at his very best; he liked "Melbourne," and he liked the little house covered with roses and the carefully mown English lawn. But he kept his bedroom door locked, and the housemaid was quite astonished in the morning when she knocked at eight o'clock to "call" him with a cup of tea and hot water, and he would not let either in! She had never known a gentleman before who refused to be "called."

After breakfast, he put a trunk call through to the Soviet office, to ask if there were any news. His secretary's anxious voice enquired, "Where are you?" to which he responded, "I do not know."

"But, if anything should happen to you—we *must* know where you are."

"But I cannot tell you, for I do not know," was all he could reply, and laughed.

One day while he was sitting to me, Kameneff said: "Why don't you come to Russia?"

"How can I?" I asked. And he made the wondrous reply:

"I will take you with me when I go, and I will get Lenin and Trotzki to sit to you."

I was sure he did not mean it, that it was too wonderful to happen, but I answered:

"If you will take me, I will go!" And he also did not believe I meant it. After that, however, we talked about it a good deal; the idea seemed to appeal to him and I became familiarized with it. After a while I began to count on it, to look forward and to grow impatient. He would be going soon, he promised, for he and Mr. Lloyd George were not in harmony.

Then my ministerial friend came to see me and conversation turned vitriolically upon the Russians, whose clay facsimiles stood carefully hidden like ghosts in an obscure corner. I then learnt that every movement of theirs was known, and that every message they sent was read. The British knew the Russian code.

It seemed to me that my studio was the background of a plot that contained a dramatic quality interspersed with humour.

An hour later Kameneff arrived.

"I shall be leaving in a day or two. I will telegraph to Moscow that I am bringing you."

This put me in a ferment of agitation. If the British Government really could read the Soviet code, they would be informed of my going and would stop me.

I could not risk a miscarriage of my plan. At last I said to Kameneff:

"*Don't* telegraph."

"Why?"

"Because—well, because . . ." I hesitated, and he waited: "because THEY will know." He affected no surprise, his face underwent no shadow of a change, he just said quite quietly,

"I thought so."

II

The decision to go to Russia precluded my presence at my exhibition. I wondered indeed if in my absence any exhibition could or would take place. The possibilities of modelling a portrait of Lenin, however, besides the adventure and the interest of the trip, seemed worthy to eclipse all other considerations. Exhibitions one could have during the rest of one's life, but here was something that could never happen again. It must be taken when it offered or, if one were a coward or a fool, declined.

I never hesitated in my decision, but there was an obstacle. I had barely enough money for a single ticket to Stockholm. Kameneff had not offered to pay, nor did I wish to be under any obligation. He assured me that I should need no money in Moscow, but I felt it was necessary to start with a sufficient sum to cover my return. I confided my dilemma to "Melbourne" who smiled cynically and said he doubted if a return ticket would be required! However, it was a worth-while journey, he agreed, and he thought he could find the required money. Twenty-four hours later he handed me a hundred pound note.

"It isn't mine," he said, "you needn't thank me." I accepted it and asked no questions.

I lost no time in securing *visas* for Norway and Sweden. Kameneff tried to get me the Esthonian *visa* but failed, because the Esthonians had undertaken not to give any *visas* to British subjects without the sanction of the British Foreign Office. "Melbourne" told me to apply to Mr. X at the Foreign Office, who was in a position to grant me the necessary Foreign Office authorization. None of my persuasive powers could win this gentleman's sanction to my trip.

After two hours' discussion (he was patient and I was persistent) he agreed to a compromise.

"I won't help you, but I won't hinder you. If you can get through from Stockholm, it's a sporting chance!"

That evening Shane and "Melbourne" were in the studio when Kameneff telephoned to say he was leaving the next morning and asked:

"Are you really coming?"

"Of course."

"Remember, very little luggage and very simple clothes."

He rang off. I turned to Shane: there were tears in his eyes.

"I wonder if you will ever come back—I wonder if I ought to let you go?" he said.

"I *must* go—I *will* go! It's worth while, I don't care what happens!" I insisted.

III

When I left the next morning with two small suit-cases, I advised my maid, who had cheeks like apples and was always smiling, that:

"If anyone asks for me, say I have gone away on a visit and left no address. Don't worry if I am away rather a long time."

It was not in her nature to worry. She grinned and nodded.

Shane had come to fetch me and I believe she thought I was eloping with him. The moment for such a departure was propitious. My father was in Ireland fishing, my mother at Brede with the children, the "aunts" were out of London: no one would miss me for days. I might indeed be dead in a ditch and decomposed before it would occur to anyone to wonder where I was.

I would have ample time to reach Stockholm, and from there I would write a letter of explanation.

At St. Pancras were the whole Soviet Trade Delegation, to see us start, Krassin armed with a large box of chocolates tied up with red ribbon which he presented to me. The communists seemed amused. Before the train left, Shane persuaded me to leave in his safe keeping some jewelry I was wearing, which he offered to deposit in my bank. This I did, with the result that some idle eavesdropper spread a rumour that picturesquely still clings to me, to the effect that I had disposed of Russian crown jewels on behalf of the Soviet Government!

"Melbourne" decided to travel with us to Newcastle in case I encountered difficulties from the Port authorities.

No sooner had we started than I discovered the loss of a small bag containing the hundred pounds! Kameneff dismissed the incident as negligible; money, he said, was unimportant. My distress, however, was unalleviated until "Melbourne" discovered the bag in the lost property office at Newcastle, whither it had preceded us on the train that left ten minutes before ours. I immediately extracted the hundred pound note and handed it to Kameneff for safe keeping, and as he put it away in an inner pocket "Melbourne's" expression aroused my curiosity.

During that journey to Newcastle, Kameneff told me of his row the day before with Lloyd George and of everything he had said, of how astonishingly he seemed to know everything he and Krassin had done since they came to London.

"So much so," said Kameneff, "that I turned to Krassin and said to him in Russian, 'He'll mention Mrs. Sheridan in a minute.' "

Lloyd George did, I believe, accuse him of propaganda, however the only propaganda he made that I knew of was on myself!

"Melbourne" put me on board the ship. I passed the passport officials some time after Kameneff, as if I did not know him. It is surprising how self-conscious one feels in doing something clandestinely. I might have been a Victorian "Miss" eloping to Gretna Green, expecting every cloud of dust to reveal a pursuer.

As the ship slid away from the quay, I recall my sense of thrill, of adventure, and of fatalistic trust in Providence, and a little sudden pang of fear as "Melbourne" became a mere speck and the ship made for the open sea. It had been so easy to believe in Kameneff when I was surrounded by friends, but now I must trust in that belief. My life and my work, everything depended now upon the little bearded man at my side. I had given myself into his care. No doubt there were difficulties of unimaginable description ahead, but Kameneff would see me through. He would be my guardian and my guide. There are moments in one's life when it is necessary to have blind faith.

We stood side by side watching the coast of England wrapped in a golden haze like a Turner picture. He had a certain sensitive intuition like a woman, he guessed the reactions that were taking place after the excitement of such a flight. He knew I was leaving children, the devotion of friends and an even workaday life for the unknown which he had offered. He tried to reassure me. I was going to be happy, he said, well received and tremendously interested.

"You will never regret what you are doing. You will do the bust of Lenin, and he is the greatest figure of our century. You will achieve fame for yourself, you will be the most interesting woman in Europe."

He had a journalistic appreciation of situations, but I thought he exaggerated a little. Several times he referred to his wife. She was Trotzki's sister, a woman of culture and charm; I would find her sympathetic, she would be delighted to have me as their guest—(even as I write I feel like scrawling "*Watch the Sequel*" across the page). We would be great friends, he was sure. He told me stories of their past, of his arrest and of his wife among the crowd of onlookers at the trial, listening to his sentence—she despised any emotional manifestation, but when she saw him the next day in his prison shirt she cried for the first time. He talked of her with pride, above all he had a pathetic belief that we should like each other.

At Christiania, the Soviet representative, Litvinoff, met us. While he talked with Kameneff on the station platform I stood awkwardly alone, overwhelmed by a dismal sense of being out of my element. I learnt later that Litvinoff asked, "Who accompanies you? A spy?"

When we arrived at the Grand Hotel a jazz band greeted our ears rather incongruously, but was soon lost again when the door of the lift slammed upon us hastily, and we were conveyed upwards. Jazz! A sort of kaleidoscopic reminder of the life I had definitely turned my back on.

It was late in the evening, it was the end of a long day's train journey, I longed to go to bed but I little knew my Russians. This was a mere preface to my initiation. Long conversations took place, tedious because not a word was understandable, and crowds of people appeared unendingly. The hotel servants were rude. I did not know if this was because all Norwegians were naturally ill-mannered, or because they disliked Bolsheviks.

They would not give me a room, they said the hotel was full. I could not get any hot water or a bath, they said the bathroom was reserved for gentlemen! A secretary of the delegation offered me her room; she would stow herself with a friend. I was confronted with a bed and someone else's used sheets. I have to laugh now in recollection of my disgust. In all my sheltered life I never had slept in someone else's sheets. I had still much to experience before I learned to appreciate a good soft bed in a first-class hotel, even if the sheets were used sheets.

I was sad that night. Kameneff had suddenly become transformed into a preoccupied stranger. I had to become familiarized with him in this rôle.

The next night we travelled to Stockholm and were met at the station in the early morning by the head of the Swedish Socialist party, who drove us to the Grand Hotel. The Grand Hotel refused (politely) to give us rooms—they could not do so without official permission. This was forthcoming a few hours later; in the meantime we went to the house of a Russian "comrade." (My environment was so full now of "comrades" that there ceased to be anything affected or distinctive in the title.) Ensued more talking and waiting about until word came that the Grand Hotel placed rooms at our disposal. We then transferred immediately.

Kameneff was so busy that I found the easiest thing to do was to be his secretary. I sat in his sitting-room, received his telephone messages, booked his appointments, accepted his orders, guarded his private interviews, made people wait, disentangled his changes of plan and felt I was of use. Some of the "comrades" asked me if I belonged to THE PARTY. Did I speak Russian, and had I been working in the Soviet office in London. No? Then I was a member of the British Labour Party? Those were the awkward moments, when a telephone bell or a knock on the door was a blessed interruption.

`IV

The next morning I decided to ring up the Crown Prince. It seemed impossible to stay the few remaining hours in Stockholm of so many memories without making a sign of life to the husband, now a widower, of the dearest friend I had ever known. Kameneff strongly advised me to do nothing of the sort. He was sure that under the circumstances I should be ill-received. I disregarded him and put a call through to the Palace. Kameneff lingered in the room and listened. As soon as I recognized the Crown Prince's voice I said:

"You'll never guess who it is or where I'm going."

He answered: "It's Clare. Where are you?"

"I'm at the Grand Hotel, and I leave on a ship this evening."

He said: "If it's by ship, then you're going to Russia. Come to lunch and tell me what you are up to!"

When I laid down the receiver, Kameneff said:

"I wanted to hear the 'tone' of your conversation, and I am pleased. You did it well."

Perhaps he expected my "tone" to be servile?

The Crown Prince was extremely interested. He agreed the adventure was well worth while, of historic interest and that as far as "risk" was concerned, that was my own affair, and no one else's. He wanted to know what sort of a man Kameneff was, and took, as I knew he would, a broad-minded and tolerant view. He admitted that we really knew nothing of what was going on in Russia, and we ought to know. The *suite* seemed much perplexed. Even beloved Princess Margaret's democratic training of them had hardly prepared them for such an eventuality as this! In the middle of it all, Kameneff telephoned to me that he had succeeded in getting the Esthonian *visa.* This relieved me of a great anxiety, as the successful issue of my journey had seemed until that moment to hang in the balance. Nothing in this world is certain, and although I believed I would get through, I might have had to return ignominiously from Stockholm, looking and feeling utterly foolish. This eventuality, however, was spared me.

With charming thoughtfulness the Crown Prince sent out for a very big tin of biscuits for me to take on the journey. Food was reported short in Moscow. (For that tin of biscuits, which lasted during nearly all my sojourn in the country, and was shared by many, I had reason to invoke repeated blessings on his head.) He was full of solicitude for my welfare, finally escorted me to my taxi in the courtyard and wished me God-speed.

(Because I mentioned this interview with the Crown Prince in a subsequent newspaper article, his relations have never forgiven me. They affect the opinion that my indiscretion nearly cost him his prospective throne. There could be no greater illusion. The people who rob princes of their thrones are the working classes, and it was certainly not the workers whom he offended when he received me on my way to Russia. On the contrary, his gesture was appreciated and commended by those few who knew it, and chief among these was Ström, the leader of the Socialists on whom I worked much Crown Prince propaganda!)

One of the A.D.C.'s, a friend of olden days, drove me to the boat, after which he received the immediate visit of the Chief of the Police, who wished to know what his connection was with foreign Bolsheviks and revolutionaries! This leads me to reflect that it is perhaps kinder and more prudent for one's friends' sakes not to mix them if one has a great variety.

The wretched little boat that conveyed us to Reval was so overcrowded that we could get no berths, but the captain most courteously placed a large saloon—which could be ill spared—at our disposal. The passengers looked at us curiously. There were little groups of international communists who surrounded Kameneff like a kind of bodyguard; there were journalists and traders, some who hoped to get into Russia, others who asked me to intercede with Kameneff on their behalf.

It is surprising how clear in my memory are the details of that journey. We got to know everyone on board pretty well, for the steamer, naturally slow, was delayed by storms. We were obliged to put into Hango, on the Finnish coast. At sunset two or three days after we started (or it seemed so, but one had lost all track of time) we steamed into Reval harbour. There were pointed towers and the sound of deep mellow bells.

We were met by a motor (the only motor) and by Kameneff's young son, as well as a Red Army soldier, and two small children belonging to the Soviet representative, and these took up so much room it was difficult to fit in the luggage. We drove through the narrow streets with the Red Army soldier hanging on to the footboard on one side and Kameneff's boy on the other, and unloaded ourselves at a hotel which had been converted into Soviet headquarters. The hotel was grim, dark and unutterably dirty, paper peeling off the walls, bare wooden floors. Enlarged prints of Lenin and Trotzki hung on the walls, which represented these heroes in the most unprepossessing way possible. The unknown tongue was jabbered all round me. I shook innumerable outstretched hands, Kameneff seemed to be engaged in a momentous council, but it turned out to be merely a discussion as to where we should have supper. Finally we were led to the bed-living room of some "comrade" whose wife boiled a samovar and prepared food for us. While the others were talking she turned upon me her questioning!

"Tell me some news—we have none here. Is it true Comrade Kameneff is *chassé* from England? How pretty your hair is, Mademoiselle. Does it curl naturally? Yes? Is it true that Krassin will soon follow? There is famine—No?—in England? Ah, but there will be soon, when your strike begins. Have you a mackintosh with you and goloshes? No? But you can buy nothing in Russia. Do you not know that? No? Have you soap? They will do your washing if you give them the soap to do it with. Are you going to stay with Comrade Kameneff in Moscow? Yes? Do you know his wife? No? Oh!"

After supper Kameneff presided at a meeting. I remember sitting for what seemed interminable hours in a big room with nothing to do, understanding no single word, wondering when it would end, and what would happen after it, and where we all would sleep, and whether I would be given a room—etc. Kameneff was much too busy to be spoken to by me—I dared not interrupt. I just waited and waited, growing more sleepy and bored and miserable. I did not yet know that Russians will talk a night through, nor had my evolution sufficiently advanced to know that it is not imperative to have a bed to sleep on if one needs to sleep! To-day under the same circumstances, instead of sitting upright with aching back, I would curl up on the floor with a suit-case under my head, and go to sleep like a Russian, an Arab or a Turk.

Towards midnight the circle broke up, and Gukovski, the Soviet representative at Reval, a little bent man who had broken his back in a motor accident, began to throw things into a suit-case. I wondered sleepily at the pathetic way in which men do these things, and supposed he was preparing for a journey. A revolver was thrown in on top of jaeger undergarments. He looked up and saw me watching, and without pausing in his "packing" asked what *my* mission was. I told him. His little birdlike eyes danced with merriment and his red, pointed beard jerked spasmodically.

"Do you really think . . ." he asked, "that you are going to get Lenin to sit to you?"

I did think so.

"Well, you won't!" he said, and his bent shoulders shook with his ironic chuckles.

Eventually it dawned upon me that Gukovski, and I, that "we" in fact were going to start on the journey together that very night. With what relief did I follow the party towards the station. The night air revived my jaded spirits.

A *wagon-de-luxe* awaited us. It was most spacious and had been the Minister of Railway's own before the Revolution. After a midnight supper of tea and caviare I retired to a perfectly good *wagon-lit* compartment and slept.

It took us from Saturday night until Monday morning to reach Moscow. The train lingered by the way, the engine was wood fired. There was a long stop during which we had time to go for a walk in the woods. Some further hours we waited at a junction for the Petrograd train to join ours. All the while Gukovski was sardonic and chuckling, he listened to Kameneff's "plans" for me and made no comment, only his evil little eyes twinkled with malign mischief. Kameneff told him I would stay at the Kremlin with his wife who would like me—"won't she?" He turned for corroboration to his boy who already liked me. Alexander nodded and Gukovski chuckled: "Hee, hee, hee!" and looked at me sideways slyly.

Besides Gukovski, our other companion was the good-looking Red Army soldier, who sat and smoked with us and ate with us, and talked and was charming and friendly. He gave me his ring as a souvenir. I thought he was an officer, but learnt he was a chauffeur.

On Sunday night, long after I had gone to sleep, Kameneff knocked at my door (Russians are no respecters of sleep) and came in to tell me this news:

"A friend of mine, an old school friend, called Zinoviev, has joined us on the Petrograd train; he tells me that my telegram announcing my arrival with you was delivered in the middle of a Soviet conference. It caused a great deal of amusement, but Lenin said that whatever he felt about it there was nothing to do but to give the artist some sittings, as she had come so far for the purpose. So there! Lenin has consented, and I thought it worth while to wake you up to tell you!"

He was in great spirits. Apparently his friend Zinoviev had told him that no blame or censure was to attach to him for the failure of his mission to England. He was full of ideas and plans concerning the things I should see and the places he would take me to apart from my work.

"And if I have to go South, you shall come with me."

It all sounded most hopeful.

V

At ten-thirty on a morning in September, 1920, the train steamed into Moscow station. Kameneff jumped out on to the platform to be welcomed by a crowd of "Comrades," and by his wife, who had come to meet him. Through the train window I observed his reception and that of his friend, Zinoviev, who was rather fat and yellow and had longish hair.

Long after the platform had cleared, Kameneff was left walking up and down with his wife in animated and earnest conversation. By their gesticulations I judged they were disputing. It was a disappointing welcome for him, I thought.

At last they entered the compartment; Mrs. Kameneff shook hands stiffly, sat down as far from me as possible, and looking at the odds and ends remaining from breakfast, a crust and a lump of cheese, said severely in French:

"We do not live *chic* like that in Moscow. It is a bad thing for the people to see (and she pulled down the blind) —they will think that Leo Borisvitch (Kameneff) has become a bourgeois."

"Leo Borisvitch" thus referred to by this thin-lipped hard-eyed bitchovitch, averted his look and bit his lip. He was witnessing the meeting between the two women who, he had assured himself, were going to be such friends!

His wife set to again in Russian. Their boy stood awkwardly in the doorway, listening to them and looking at me. I affected not to be aware that the situation was created by my presence, but I confess that I never felt more uncomfortable in my life. She was evidently saying, "I won't have the woman under my roof," and he: "I have brought her all this way and I can't leave her in the street."

It was a dismal anti-climax. To be inhospitably received at the end of a long journey in a strange (*such* a strange) land, was a wretched experience. Between Kameneff and myself I felt a wall arising that every moment was growing higher and threatened to obliterate him altogether. For a leader of revolution he cut a poor figure. I had no idea that a Bolshevik could be so easily terrorized. (Since then I have seen several Bolshevik luminaries affected by their wives in the same curious way!)

In the end, mercifully, I was not abandoned on the siding. We left the train together and I followed them to a superb open Rolls Royce, into which we piled with all the luggage that could be got in. We then drove at frantic speed amid frenetic hooting through half-deserted streets, like London on an early Sunday morning. The shops were shuttered, a few pedestrians shuffled rather than walked and looked at us apathetically. Then the Kremlin towered before us, with its square high gate towers surmounted by Imperial eagles. What a sight! Was it Chinese or simply Russian? Its architecture was unknown to me. Our car slackened speed to show a permit to a sentry at a gate, who let us pass into the amazing precincts, where gold-domed buildings of all shapes and sizes confronted us on every side. We drove through an archway to a door that led to what had been, they said, the apartments of the Czar's suite. Up the resounding stairs we trooped, and at the end of a long wide corridor a peasant maid with a handkerchief tied under her chin came forth and hurried towards us. Kameneff kissed her on the mouth, a truly Russian salutation, and led the way into a big light room which gave access to other rooms right and left. Mrs. Kameneff flung herself exhaustedly into a chair, pulled off her hat and began to say more things in Russian. Kameneff showed me the next room, which was like a doctor's waiting-room, and had albums on a table; he asked me to entertain myself and wait, and he closed the door.

My idea, of course, at the end of a journey, is to unpack, wash and change my clothes. There did not seem to be the slightest prospect of being able to do this, and I sat down to wait resignedly.

An hour or so later I was called in to breakfast, which consisted of tepid chicory with skimmed milk, some *casha* that was dry, and black bread that was damp. The whole inedible! Kameneff said the maid was preparing a bath for me, but that it would take three hours to heat. His wife wished me to know that the people were starving and it was not customary to waste money on heating bath water. She mentioned how many thousand roubles this cost. (As money could not buy food because there was none to buy, and as a rouble had less value than a pearl button, it did not really matter how it was spent.) Kameneff added no comment; he hardly dared to speak at all. He was evidently distressed and he made a pretext of overwhelming work to go out as soon as possible. She went with him, and they stayed out for the rest of the day, leaving me with the boy, Alexander, and Anna Andrévna the maid, who spoke a little German.

Alexander took me for a walk in the Kremlin precincts. I must not go outside, he explained, as without a permit I should be unable to get back. The Kremlin, however, was big enough for me. It stood dominatingly on its height and one surveyed the glistening domes, copper and gold and green and sapphire blue, that looked like fairy bubbles.

It was a gorgeous September day, with a little touch of chill in the air. The leaves of the trees in the garden below the Kremlin wall were bright yellow and fluttered slowly down as a warning of winter. Red soldiers marched and drilled or sat in groups. When the evening grew too cold to remain out I went back to the apartment. The Kameneffs had not returned. Anna Andrévna had no notion when they would. "Madame" was on the committee of theatres and often came back quite late. "He" usually spent the night at Soviet conferences, which assembled at about ten o'clock but did not start conferring before midnight! This was a cheerful prospect. Where was I to sleep? The maid did not know. She suggested the drawing-room sofa; that was the Russian custom.

"But I want to undress, tuck up in blankets and put the light out!" I insisted.

How she laughed! I don't believe she had laughed for months. She said I must wait. Happily my hosts returned to supper, that is to say to a cup of tea without sugar and more tepid *casha*, but this time they partook of raw herring, which is much relished by Russians, but I found the smell of it sufficient to eat with my bread.

We would have some sugar and some sardines, Kameneff promised, as soon as the cases had been unpacked that he had brought from England. Mrs. Kameneff sniffed disdainfully—people had got used, she said, to doing without things. She then indicated the next room for me to sleep in. It was Alexander's, but he would find some other place. I was truly thankful, and being very tired excused myself. (There was nothing to eat and they talked all the time in Russian and my presence seemed to cast a gloom.) Mrs.

Kameneff in reply to my good-night stuck out two sticky fingers by way of handshake.

The room I was given was a kind of passage room through which they had to pass to get to theirs, but the bed was in a corner behind a screen. I was so tired I would not have cared if a regiment had bivouacked in the room, nor if Mrs. Kemeneff strangled me in the dark!

The next morning Mrs. Kameneff passed through my room; I was in my dressing-gown; it was a vivid futurist design—flame colour and emerald. Her heart of a woman was touched for a second. "You have *des jolies choses*, here we have nothing," she said wistfully.

The opening of those cases was eagerly awaited. Kameneff had been commissioned by all his friends to bring them back things from England, that is to say necessities which had become unprocurable in Russia. That evening Mrs. Kameneff was more sulky than ever. She reproached Leo Borisvitch in bitter tones.

"I asked you to bring me a hat from London, and you have brought me a mackintosh!"

I did not blame her ill-humour. To have endured two years of revolutionary conditions and then to have this chance—a husband going to London! If he did not know how to choose a hat, why did he not ask me to do it for him?

Four days I endured this strained atmosphere. I was ignored or snubbed, but most of the time I was alone. The maid was kind to me; in broken German she said I must not *traurig* be, and in her simple illuminating way she summed up her employers:

"*Der Mann ist ein goldener Mensch, aber die Frau, sie jammert immer!*"

I fail to find the English equivalent of "jammert." It was a perfect description and suited her admirably.

The third morning Anna ran to me excitedly, she said an Englishman was in the salon. I hurried to see, and there was a young man waiting for Kameneff. I exclaimed:

"Oh, I am glad you are English!"

He answered rather indignantly that he was not. It was John Reed, the American communist. I poured out my predicament to him. What should I do? How should I get out of this *impasse?* He listened with a wry smile, said I must get used to Russian ways. No one was likely to bother about me in any way unless I protested or made a fuss. He was in a grumbly mood himself; he had come to ask for some permits that had been promised and not delivered. He certainly did not cheer me, but he did something far more valuable and that was to instil me with rebellion!

"Fend for yourself—don't wait for anything to be done for you," that was the gist of it. I awaited my chance, and I did not have to wait long..

On the fifth morning Mrs. Kameneff went out early, Leo Borisvitch had been at an all-night conference and appeared late. We were alone at last. All my pent-up resentment of his wife's hostile attitude, and of his cowardly *volte face* burst forth:

"You *must* let me go," I implored.

"Go where?" he asked.

"To a hotel."

"There are no hotels."

"John Reed is in one."

"Oh, that's full of journalists!"

"What does it matter what it's full of?"

He laughed grimly.

"Wait a little."

"What for?"

"You will see, it will all come right."

"Your wife hates me."

"When she knows you she won't hate you."

(That then, was what I was to wait for!)

"Camarade Kameneff! How *can* you?"

He looked rather foolish and rightly so. How could he suppose his wife would ever like me? How had he not guessed that she would hate me? One expects a man to know his wife.

I said I couldn't wait, I must go; I couldn't bear it. He seemed very sad, it was so different from all our plans and expectations. He promised to see what he could do. There was a guest house—perhaps he could arrange a room—but there would be no one to look after me. It was full of Foreign Office officials who were busy. I was most persistent, however. No guest ever implored as I did to be allowed to depart.

"Please, please! For pity's sake let me go. *Do* let me go—do send me away!" I was nearly in tears.

Kameneff got up abruptly; he said he would make the arrangements from his office. When he returned in the evening he said it was too late, but the next morning he escorted me in the Rolls-Royce to a large house on the opposite side of the river. I did not see Mrs. Kameneff to say "good-bye" or to thank her for her hospitality! I never saw her again. Doubtless her relief was great, but mine was greater. I wonder she did not poison me. Who would have been the wiser?

(I cannot resist pleasurably adding the information, six years later, that Kameneff has a new wife!)

VI

The guest house, known simply as "Sofiskaya," because it was No. 14 of that road, stood back behind iron railings and sentried gates. It belonged to a rich sugar merchant, who had fled to France. The old family servant remained, a pathetic witness of changed times, who tried to look after his master's bric-à-brac, and waited on the strange new Government guests at table.

The interior decoration of the house was modern German Gothic, the furniture imitation Louis XVI, upholstered with real *petit point*. There were innumerable bronzes and Sèvres china ornaments and figures. There were gaps on the walls where the best pictures (Corots chiefly) had been removed to museums. Rosa Bonheur lions, late Victorian family portraits and others had been left. A drawing-room ceiling was blatantly painted by Flameng. The general effect, although vulgar, was sumptuous and comfortable.

The house was under the control and management of a commandant, a kind of male official housekeeper, a pale wan aristocratic Pole, who waved his hands about in Aubrey Beardsley attitudes. The room that was appointed to me was next to the ballroom. The walls were covered with green damask; there was a French carved-wood bed with fine hand-embroidered linen—monogrammed. Adjoining was a big bathroom with marble wash-basins. The bath water was heated once a week.

Here Kameneff left me; he said he would telephone to find out how I was getting on, and promised no delay in finding me a studio so that I could begin to work. Zinoviev would sit to me as soon as things were ready. Zinoviev I concluded was worth doing, as Kameneff seemed to think so, but until I had I decided I would not return to England. Kameneff said I must be patient, but patience is a quality I do not know.

That evening, when I went to the big long dining-room for supper, everyone stared, for new-comers were rare. A foreigner, especially a woman, aroused curiosity. It was supposed I was a journalist. An American received me as if the house were his and I his guest; he sat at the top of the table. Russian officials sat at variously spaced distances as if preferring to be alone like Englishmen at a country-house breakfast. Those who said least looked hardest. There was a little Jew called Rothstein who had been expelled from England. He sustained a perpetually bright conversation until cut short by the American, who hated to listen and liked to talk about Los Angeles. In reply to questions about myself my explanations drew forth the usual sceptical smiles. I felt as when I left home to start life in my studio and could not convince anyone that I was capable of making good.

The American, whose name was Vanderlip (not the well-known millionaire, but the Russian authorities thought he was, and treated him as an important person), was in pursuit of some great monopoly concession. Like me, he was faced with a deal of waiting. For that reason he seemed thankful for my presence. His Americanism was an amusing contrast to Slavism. The high pressure standard still clung to him; he moved jerkily, he spoke quickly. When it was eating time he jumped up and hurried to the dining-room, though there was nothing to eat. He went for quick walks, though there was nowhere in particular to walk to. He suffered tortures of inactivity, waiting, endless waiting.

We were thrown into each other's society for want of better, and he adopted a protective attitude. Until I had made a few friends and acquaintances I, too, was thankful for his company, but later it began to cause comment, and I was told that I did not need the protection of an American capitalist in Soviet Russia.

After dinner (cabbage soup, rice boiled in water, and lumps of iridescent flesh called meat), we sat together in the big drawing-room. Vanderlip turned on all the lights, including two great chandeliers, eight wall brackets and the table lamps. He said it reminded him of an embassy; that it must become an embassy some day, the Embassy of the United States! He loved to dwell on the splash his concession was going to make "at home."

One night a Foreign Office official called Mikhail Borodin, who lived in the house, came and joined us. Vanderlip thereupon got up (quickly, of course), and retired to his room. Borodin turned out all the lights except one.

"The vulgarity," he murmured.

He lit a cigarette and sat back in a tapestry chair and looked at me through half-closed eyes and raised enquiring eyebrows. It was the first time that a Russian had taken any notice of my existence, although I had been in the house at least a week. He had straight, rather long, shiny black hair that would not stay back, although he continually ran his fingers through it. His little pointed beard was well trimmed, and he wore the Russian blouse, embroidered, high-necked and tied round the waist with a red cord.

"What is your economic position?" he asked suddenly.

My economic position? It seemed to me I had none!

"Do you belong to the little bourgeoisie?"

What was the "little bourgeoisie"? My grandmother, who lived seventeen years in Paris, used to tell me it was "bourgeois" to have bad manners! The word was associated in my mind as a term of reproach. In the French Revolution one heard of *aristos*, but in the Russian Revolution never! I felt very hurt that Borodin should not recognize me as an "aristo."

The days passed—just a few, but they felt like many—my inactivity maddened me. I had nothing to do but walk the town looking at the faces of the people. The place I preferred of all others was the little park below the Kremlin wall, where the yellow leaves were falling fast. There people sat on benches, or walked slowly past me as if walking were an effort. What faces! All cast in the same mould, expressive of such patience and such pain. Not one smiling face among them, not one alert, quick step. Uniform apathy, misery, the misery of want and hunger. There was the sadness, too, of autumn, of shortening days; the dread of a rapidly-approaching winter—a Russian winter with a shortage of fuel, of everything in fact that was necessary. Death faced many, but the Slav faces death stoically. He is Oriental.

These people had already suffered: how much had they yet to suffer? "But suffering is so interesting." The words of Arnold Bennett haunted me. There is a kind of suffering that is almost ecstasy. Was that the quality of the Russian people's suffering? As flagellation to the neurotic, so is martyrdom to the Russian people, I thought. Dostoyefski helped me to this conclusion. To Dostoyefski even the portraying of pain was a sensual emotion. So I wondered and thought as I wandered in the little park at the foot of the Kremlin wall.

Nearly every evening we were taken to the opera. Places were reserved for us in the Foreign Office Box. The theatre was the size of Covent Garden, decorated with crimson and gold. In the Czar's box, reserved for Communists and their wives, there were men in cloth caps and women with shawls over their heads eating apples. The house was packed with working-people who had admission free through the distribution of tickets to their unions. Here one saw the Russian faces in another aspect. People leaned forward on their elbows and watched the ballet with devouring interest. There was not a cough nor a whisper. The people were tired people and had earned their enjoyment and were appreciating it to the full. Their intensity was most impressive. For the first time they had a right to the pleasures of the rich, these people who had always slaved and been treated as slaves.

The Russian faces, not the propaganda of the Communists, began to work an effect upon me.

VII

One night I was sitting in the gilded drawing-room talking to Vanderlip when the telephone rang. It was Kameneff to inform me that he had secured a room for me at the Kremlin as a studio. He pleaded his inability to get to me owing to stress of work, promised that all would come right, swore as the faithless do that he did not forget!

The room that was placed at my disposal was in the big round building which used to be the Courts of Justice and was now the Soviet conference building with the red flag flying above. It was a large room, semicircular, whitewashed and empty. In one corner a formidable iron door with round peep-holes led into a small cell containing a safe sealed up with Soviet seals. I was told this was a disused prison, but I should have judged more likely a guardroom. At all events it was grim and rather depressing until the late afternoon sun flooded it with light, and an incongruous Louis XVI gilt sofa was carried in by soldiers to furnish it! That absurdly out-of-place sofa gave me frequent subject for meditation. Whose salon had it once adorned? And what tea-time gossip could it tell?

Kameneff ordered sackfuls of clay to be brought to my door; it was bone dry and had evidently not been "worked" for years. Five men watched inertly while I tried to crumble it with a crowbar. Finally an intelligent carpenter came to my rescue, saw what I wanted, beat and watered and stirred it for three hours until it was in condition.

While this was going on, and I was up to my elbows in clay, my face covered and my clothes also, Kameneff appeared with Zinoviev. They both laughed and said that it was evident I would not be ready for many days. I told them I would be ready on the morrow, thanks to the carpenter.

"A man of that intelligence and energy is worthy to be a government minister," I said.

This was repeated to the carpenter, a man of no politics, who smiled rather disdainfully, and Zinoviev observed:

"Here everything is possible."

Kameneff then asked if I had any requests or complaints to make. It was an opportunity to complain concerning my difficulties in getting through the Kremlin gate. Every morning Alexander or little Serge Trotzki had to come and fetch me; it was tiresome for me and for them.

"There is no liberty here," I grumbled. (I had visualized liberty as the synonym of revolution. In Soviet Russia I had expected to find the new land of freedom.)

Kameneff gave a significant chuckle.

"*Il y a une liberté bien disciplinée,*" he replied and fumbled in his pocket. He had forestalled my grievance and handed me a pass which enabled me to come and go in the Kremlin until December. I was independent at last.

Zinoviev sat to me the next day. He arrived—an hour late—in the frame of mind of a man who means to spend the rest of his life trying to recover that hour. He was restless and impatient; he sighed and groaned, looked up and down, looked out of the window and then at a newspaper. He seemed arrogant rather than vain. His face was thick, his neck short, his chest pulpy, his hair curly, his lips petulant, his eyelids heavy. The effect was of a shrewd, fat, middle-aged woman, but he had a certain picturesque element that with slight exaggeration could be turned to artistic account.

VIII

Two days after Zinoviev's first sitting Kameneff told me to expect Dzhirjinsky, the President of the "Extraordinary Commission" (or what the English papers called the "Red Terror"). I had been told that he was even more unlikely to sit to me than Lenin. He was a recluse and a sick man. By what powers of persuasion Kameneff was able to induce him, I shall never know.

While I was waiting for him to arrive, some soldiers and others drifted in to see what was being done. I had no privacy, and never could keep out those who chose to enter. Soldiers in particular would stand in groups, discuss and go away, often without so much as a nod to me. On this occasion, after the idlers had left, a small pale man in uniform came in shyly, looked at me and then at my work. I took no notice of him, presuming him to be another passer-by. I waited for him to go away. Then he said his name was Dzhirjinsky! I had expected someone different. This modest unassuming figure was a great surprise.

As I analysed him that first hour, he made a curious impression upon me. He was calm and sphinx-like, except his eyes which seemed to be swimming in tears. His face was narrow and his nose transparent like alabaster. A deep cough periodically shook his body and forced the blood up into his face. He provoked in me subconsciously a feeling of pity, and yet God knows, by all the laws, it should have been just the contrary. I longed to talk to him, but unfortunately our only medium was German and my knowledge of it limited. I remarked, however, that it was a great help to the artist when people sat as still as he did.

He answered: "One learns patience and calm in prison."

I asked him how long he was in prison.

"Eleven years, a quarter of my life," he said in a voice that in spite of its calm had depth and intensity.

Had the Imperial judges but known what a vengeance they were storing up in this man! Prison had broken his physique but not his spirit. He worked now and suffered for Russia, for he suffered when he condemned, but he condemned with a stern sense of duty. The position he filled he hated. When Lenin requested him to fill it he implored to be given some other, but Lenin was a judge of men; he would not select any other but this man who, "for the sake of the cause," was obliged to accept. Whoever undertook the task must remain for ever anathema in the minds of millions, and yet by his friends, Dzhirjinsky was deeply and almost emotionally adored.

When this Savonarola of the Revolution had left, I was so affected I could neither think nor work, but sat for a while meditatively.

It is one of my beliefs that thought-waves affect people psychologically. The love of a multitude, like the hate of a multitude, influences for better or for worse the individual in question. To be greatly hated, to be the object of mass hatred, must injure the health of the hated individual. In time it kills; slowly lingering perhaps, but surely that person fades, shrivels, disintegrates.

I thought this as I watched Dzhirjinsky, and when he left I felt some strange vibrations lingering. It seemed to me like the faint odour of the world-hate that encircled him. I held my head and ejaculated, "Oh, God!" without understanding why I did so. Dzhirjinsky was doomed. Call his malady by any name one chooses, he was dying, choking, suffocating, from thought-waves of hatred.

Lenin too, the least hateful personality imaginable, produced in me the same impression.

When, shortly after Dzhirjinsky's departure, Zinoviev arrived for another sitting, it was almost unendurable. He seemed to exhale a vulgarity, a coarseness, a hardness that was accentuated by contrast with Dzhirjinsky's asceticism.

IX

When it became known that I had done Dzhirjinsky, people's attitude towards me changed. I no longer aroused smiles of irony, of pity or of humour. I began to be treated with consideration, and Mikhail Borodin, who had been the worst offender, now gave up some spare time to show me galleries.

There were heaps of galleries: all the old ones were intact and new ones had been created of all the works of art from private collections. Some private houses had been turned into proletarian art schools where soldiers and sailors worked from life models.

In the Kremlin, the palace of a Grand Duchess, opposite the big bell, had become a working people's club, in which the Empire swan furniture looked pathetically out of place. The private chapel, painted black and gold, had been converted into a modelling school. The spirit of the Holy Ghost in the shape of a dove hovered over this changed scene.

It is strange to live in a big town that remains always shuttered as after an air raid! There were no shops, except the florists who had their windows full of large forced chrysanthemums, though whoever bought them I cannot imagine. (Perhaps Kameneff presented a bunch to placate his wife?) The hotels had become government offices. In the streets everyone was dressed in the same level shabbiness, but one could easily tell which were the working classes and which were the impoverished bourgeoisie. The latter suffered more because of the unaccustomed hardness of life. One saw refined faces full of intellectual pain, whereas the workers suffered only from physical starvation. Vanderlip aroused considerable communist satire by shouldering a bundle in the street for a woman who seemed not to be able to carry it further. She was middle-aged and had refined features, and was weak from protracted hunger. Vanderlip carried it as if it were a featherweight to her door. She thanked him with an intense look, without words. There was very little inequality, however, in this starvation. Everyone was suffering; I know that I was hungry always, but for that I never could have swallowed the food we were served. I often wondered how people like Kameneff could do any work, considering the way they lived. A kind of nervous tension sustained the communists. They were imbued with the same spirit as the Irish revolutionaries who hunger-strike in prison. Martyrdom for a belief is most uplifting.

It was the custom then in Moscow to attribute all the troubles of Russia to the British, the blockade that was starving the people, the subsidized war of Wrangel in the South, the attack of the Allies at Archangel, and the Poles who were supported by Allied ammunition, etc. Russian soil was certainly overrun by foreign armies: French, German, Rumanian and others, which were a frightful strain on the resources of an exhausted nation. But Russia could have disregarded blockades if her organization of transports had not broken down. In a country which had all too few railways these were either destroyed or being used for military purposes. The provisioning of the towns was paralysed.

That is how I see it in the light of retrospection, but "under the lamp, darkness" I saw and heard only that by which I was surrounded. I saw great suffering, I was persuaded that it was all my country's fault.

I knew little and understood less either of Communism or of the conditions (except what I had read in novels) that had provoked it. The laws of property and the theories of capitalism were nothing to me. I had neither property nor capital, and in spite of my father being an economist I understood nothing about economics—(as H. G. Wells said to me once, "What a pity, Clare, that you are not educated")—but I was instinctively a revolutionary. My childhood had sowed the first seeds; I felt as if I never could forget nor forgive my past.

Like Tourgeneff's "Mariana" I was ". . . *unhappy because I am a 'young lady,' a parasite, that I am completely unable to do anything—anything!!*"

Kameneff once told me that revolutionaries were of two kinds, the intellectual and the emotional. The former consolidated the revolution, the latter were undependable; one never knew when they might change. Of such, he said, was I! It was hardly a compliment, but it was true. There was no logic in me, only a passionate resentment and an emotional uplift.

I wanted to remain in Russia to help in reconstruction. Russia satisfied my pacificism. If for no other reason I would have liked to educate my children there. I was convinced (and am still convinced) that although new Russia may subterraneanly try to promote conflicts and uprisings in other nations, she will never enter upon aggressive military warfare. The Red Army is for defence. Experience has proved the necessity of maintaining that defence, but every Red Russian soldier and every relative of that soldier knew, and knows, that they would never be sent to sustain a cause outside their country.

The horror and dread of war has filled my heart ever since Dick was born. What if he should be taken one day, taken for cannon food or labelled a coward? What if worse than death befell him? Blindness, gas poisoning, defacement? How must I submit to this? The possibility of losing Dick was a nightmare that recurred at intervals. Whenever I heard the sound of marching soldiers I thought of Dick, and of Wilfred too, who had been so miserably duped, who had given his life in the vain belief that it was the last war—"the war to end war."

If living in a Socialist workers' republic would save Dick's life, then unhesitatingly we would live in it. Rather than waste energy in trying to enforce conditions upon our own country whose majority did not cry out for them, we would go to live where the conditions existed that suited us.

Such were my rather indefinite incoherent thoughts, varying in colour and design, changing kaleidoscopically, but changing only to re-form into a more emphatic pattern.

X

On October 4th, H. G. Wells arrived. He was just the same as ever, laughing and joking and extremely humorous about conditions of life in Petrograd, where he had been the guest of Gorky. It is so easy to laugh when the tragedy is not one's own. We talked until midnight of the complexes of the Russian Revolution. His quick mind had grasped and penetrated things which would have taken another as many months as he took days. He seemed not so much hostile to the theories of the new Utopia as overwhelmed by its discomfort. These discomforts were more typical of Russian habits as a whole than of Communism in particular. For instance he really suffered from the disorder and haphazardness of the Russian character; he was miserable at having to sit up and talk in an atmosphere of thick tobacco smoke all through the night, and he thought it dreadful that guests should sleep on drawing-room sofas. He missed, he said, his hot bath in the morning, and his newspapers with breakfast, and longed to get back to those conditions—vowed he'd never go away again!

H. G.'s arrival was in a sense humiliating for me. He found me in a state of expectant "waiting." He shared the general opinion that I never should get Lenin. He advised me to go back to England. He said that Kameneff had "let me down" badly. I could only say in defence of Kameneff that he had "*not* let me down *yet*."

There was a big luncheon at our house in his honour, and an effort to make a spread, part of which was frustrated by Mikhail Borodin. When I asked for some of the lovely apple cake I had seen on the side table Mikhail made grimaces at me; he had sent it back to the kitchen. The perfect Communist in him revolted against the inequality of H. G. having a special cake. Afterwards I went for a walk with Mikhail and asked him why he had tiptoed out of the dining-room? He said he did not "like the Monsieur Well —the reason why he could not tell!"

XI

The very day after H. G.'s departure the commandant of the house informed me of a message from Kameneff to the effect that I was to go and work in Lenin's room on the morrow from eleven until four o'clock. I did not sleep that night.

The next morning Borodin accompanied me to the Kremlin. I was very nervous, more nervous than I ever remember in my life. He said to me on the way:

"Just remember you are going to do the best bit of work to-day that you have ever done."

We went in by a side door, guarded by a sentry. I knew that Lenin lived somewhere in that part of the building, and I had often wondered, as I used to wonder when I was a child and passed Buckingham Palace, which were the great man's windows, and which his door. There were so many!

On the third floor we went through several doors and passages, each guarded, and finally through two rooms full of women secretaries. Mikhail Borodin handed me over to a hunchback girl who was Lenin's private secretary. Then he shook my hand firmly and said, "Work well!"

It was like being left at school! And I was so frightened, so nervous because it was the most important work I could ever have to do. The secretary pointed to a white baize door and told me to go through. It did not latch, it merely swung to.

Lenin was sitting before a gigantic desk littered with books and papers in a well-lighted room. He looked up when I came in, smiled and came across the room to greet me. He had a manner that put one instantly at ease. I apologized for having to bother him. He laughed, and explained in English that the last sculptor had occupied his room for weeks, that he had been so bored with him he had sworn it never should happen again. (A Russian sculptor listening to every interview and to every telephone conversation must have been extremely inconvenient.)

Whilst three soldiers were struggling into the room with the stand and clay, he said that I could work as long as I liked, but on condition that I let him sit at his table and read. The room was peaceful, and Lenin settled down to his book saying that he knew nothing about Art or about his own likeness, and that it did not interest him! Even as I walked round him in circles measuring him with calipers from ear to nose, I did not seem to arouse in him any consciousness of my presence. He was immediately and completely detached, concentrated and absorbed. I worked until a quarter to four, which is the longest I have ever done at a stretch. During that time he never ate or drank or smoked. Secretaries came in with letters; he opened them, signed the empty envelope without glancing even at his autograph and automatically handed it back. Only when the low buzz of the telephone accompanied by the lighting up of a small electric bulb signified a call, did his face become animated.

My efforts to start a conversation met with no encouragement, and knowing that my presence was a bore, dared not persist, though I longed to. When I rested in the window-seat and looked at him, I kept saying to myself that it was true, I really was in Lenin's room at last, I was fulfilling my mission; nothing could matter after this. I said his name over and over to myself "Lenin! Lenin!" as if it couldn't be true. There he sat in front of me, a quiet calm little man with a stupendous brow. Lenin, the genius of the greatest revolution in history—if only he would talk to me! But he didn't care about Art, and I was an artist, and he hated the bourgeoisie, and I was a bourgeoise, and he hated Winston Churchill, and I was Winston's cousin; he only admitted me to his room to please Kameneff, and it was my business to get on with my job, and not waste his time: he had nothing to say to me. When I plucked up courage to ask for news from England he handed me some *Daily Heralds!*

At four o'clock I left, having worked six hours on end without food. I had missed lunch, and dinner was not until nine. Mikhail came to see me and we drank *chai.* He asked me how I got on, and advised me to go to bed early so as to be strong for the morrow. There was a kind of feeling that while this work was in process one should live a life of retreat.

Then Vanderlip questioned me as to my impressions.

"Do not forget a word he says to you."

And I had to admit he had not said "a word."

Vanderlip said: "It is your job to make him talk. You—a pretty and experienced woman—of course you can make him."

"But he isn't like that," I explained. "It doesn't matter if I am pretty or young or old, or a girl or a boy or an old bearded man! It's all the same to him—he doesn't know I'm there!"

Mikhail Borodin smiled significantly as much as to say, "I know," and said that nothing mattered except that my portrait should succeed.

The next day Lenin greeted me as before, quite amicably, but this time there was not even the introductory exchange of greetings. More hours passed in silence. Suddenly he looked up from his book and saw me as if for the first time. He looked at his bust and smiled as one smiles indulgently at a child who is making a house of cards; and then he asked:

"What does your husband think about your coming to Russia?" (Had I a husband I suppose he would have divorced me for having eloped with Kameneff.)

"My husband was killed in the War," I answered.

"In which war?"

"In France."

"Ah, yes—of course," and he nodded wisely. "I was forgetting, you have had only one war. We have had besides the Imperialist Capitalist war, the Civil war, and the wars of self-defence."

He then talked for a little while about the "futile and heroic" spirit of self-sacrifice in which England entered the war in 1914, and he advised me to read "Le Feu," and "Clarté," of Barbusse. Then switching off from the war he asked whether I worked as a rule in London, and:

"How many hours a day?"

"An average of seven."

He seemed satisfied. Then after a pause:

"Your cousin, Monsieur Churchill, he must be pleased with you!"

The idea seemed to amuse him, he chuckled over it. I asked if Winston was the most hated man in Russia. He answered:

"He is our greatest enemy because all the force of the Capitalists is behind him, and the Court and the Military."

I ventured to say that the Court did not count for much, but he would not agree.

"It is a bourgeois pose to say that the King does not count. He counts very much. He is the head of the Army, and he is the bourgeois figurehead. He represents a great deal, and Churchill is backed by them."

I did not argue. He mentioned Wells, who had spent an hour talking with him a few days previously. The only book of his he had read was "Joan and Peter," "for the sake of the description of English intellectual bourgeois life." He regretted not having read some of his earlier fantastic novels about "the world set free," but now there was not time.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of President Kalinin, and Lenin turned to talk to him, and for the first time sat facing the window. I was able to see him in a new light, and as the interview lasted some time it was a great help, for Lenin's face in repose was not what I wanted, but as he talked animatedly to Kalinin, he screwed up his eyes and puckered his eyebrows. His expression was a mixture of severity, thoughtfulness and humour. He looked at Kalinin in a piercing way as if he could read into his very brain, as if he knew all that Kalinin could tell him, and more besides.

Kalinin was a peasant; elected by the peasants. He had the kindly simple face of the man of the soil. He was loved by the peasants, and his office in the town was easily accessible. They came to him in crowds with their petitions or complaints, and he dealt with each indefatigably. Kalinin's respect and love for Lenin were apparent in his whole bearing. When they had finished talking Kalinin looked at the bust and said it was *harasho*,[1] and asked Lenin what he thought; and Lenin laughed and said he did not know anything about it, whether it was good or bad, but that I was a quick worker. When we were alone again, I plucked up courage and asked him if he would mind sitting on the revolving stand. He consented and seemed amused, said he had never sat so high. When I kneeled down to verify the planes from below he was quite embarrassed; apparently he was unaccustomed to this attitude in women!

As he seemed disposed at last to unbend a little, I showed him some photographs of my work. Although he had protested that he knew nothing about Art he expressed most emphatic opinions about "bourgeois art," which he said aimed always at beauty. He referred contemptuously to beauty as an abstract ideal. There was nothing, he said, that could justify the beauty of my Victory. Militarism and war were hateful and ugly; not even sacrifice or heroism could lend them beauty. "That is the fault of bourgeois art —it always beautifies."

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[1] Good.

Then he looked at the photograph of Dick's head and an expression of tenderness passed over his face. I asked:

"Is that also *too* beautiful?"

He shook his head and smiled.

Then hurriedly he went back to his chair in front of the big writing-table as if he had wasted too much time. In another second I and my work existed no more.

Lenin's power of concentration was perhaps the most impressive thing about him, that and his ponderous and mighty brow that dominated all the rest, and gave him an unbalanced look, as if his head were too big for his body. His expression was always thoughtful rather than commanding. He seemed to me the real embodiment of *le penseur* (but not of Rodin's). I saw in him the thinker, not the dictator. I imagine that he lived purely in the abstract and the intellectual, and had no personal life at all. He looked very ill. The woman assassin's bullet was still in his body. One day his hand and his wrist were bandaged, he said it was "nothing," but he was the colour of ivory. He took no exercise, and the only fresh air reached him through a small revolving ventilator in an upper window pane. I believe he sometimes took a day off in the country; it was rumoured once or twice that "*Lenin est à la chasse*," but they must have been rare occasions, rare enough to create comment.

When the bust was finished as well as it could be under the unsatisfactory working conditions, he shook my hand warmly, said I had worked well, and that he thought his friends should be pleased. Then, at my request, he signed a photograph, smiling indulgently as he did so. It required two soldiers to transport the bust to my room, which was a long way from his. They passed with their load through the rooms of the astonished secretaries into the corridors, arousing the lethargic sentries at their posts, and so through to the main building. Two or three times they had to deposit "Lenin" on the floor and rest. When they reached room No. 31 they were mopping the sweat from their brows.

I thanked them and offered them stacks of paper notes, but they pointed to their Communist badges and refused. The money of course was absolutely worthless. It could buy nothing, and there was nothing to buy, but their refusal of it gave them a semblance of virtue. Instead they offered me their cigarettes, which being rationed, were of more value.

Kameneff, hearing a commotion, came in from a conference next door and then went back and fetched in the conference, among them Kalinin, who offered to sit for me as soon as he returned from the Crimea, and he suggested I should go with him to the front to do the head of General Budienny; he was starting that night at ten o'clock. I was very excited, but at nine Kameneff told me it was a troop train and impossible for a woman; this was a great disappointment. Kameneff himself started two days later for "an indefinite period." He came to say good-bye to me. Once he had promised "we shall go South together," but that was in the past. He was different now. His manner had a vague nervousness, as if he were not quite sure if I were worthy to be treated as a friend, but he would do his duty: what did I want before he left? He would order it.

Although it was still early October, winter had arrived suddenly and unexpectedly; there was snow on the ground, the river was freezing and so was I. I assured him that if he did not procure for me a warm coat he would have to bury me before the Kremlin wall! (At least I hoped that honour would be mine.) He promised I should have a coat, some caviare, and do Trotzki's bust as soon as Trotzki returned from the front. He discussed the purchasing by the government of the Russian copyright of my heads, and then departed; nor did he seem at all certain that we would meet again.

XII

Simultaneously with Kameneff's departure, Litvinoff arrived from Christiania and took up his abode in my guest house. Without him I should certainly have come off badly. He took considerable trouble to persuade Trotzki to let me do his bust, for he at first declared most emphatically and brusquely that he would not!

At last it was arranged, and a War Ministry car was sent to fetch me, which arrived at the appointed hour, a most unusual proceeding for a Russian car. (It was rumoured that on several occasions when Trotzki's car had arrived an hour or so later than ordered and kept him waiting, he had threatened the chauffeur with dire punishment. But he, however, heedlessly repeated the incident, whereupon Trotzki shot him with his revolver. I cannot vouch for the truth of the story; it may be as exaggerated as most stories generally are. At all events it was believed by most people, and the fact that Trotzki's car was the only punctual car in Moscow seemed a corroboration.)

On arrival at the War Ministry, the sentry refused to let me pass, although the chauffeur explained that I was the "Angliski sculptor." There was nothing to do but to wait until a secretary came and fetched me. Trotzki's secretaries (there was a roomful of them) seemed to consist of young soldiers. One of them telephoned from his desk to the next room to know if I might be admitted. Unlike Lenin's room, not even his private secretary entered Trotzki's without first telephoning.

A sentinel with fixed bayonet stood permanently before the door. It seemed to me strange, this method of telephoning to the next room; it was probable indeed that Trotzki could hear the spoken voice without even lifting the receiver!

Owing to my controversy with the sentry at the main entrance I was a little late, as Trotzki remarked when I was ushered in.

The first thing that struck me as unusual in him was that he had a charming manner but no smile. One is so accustomed to the social smile of greeting that the person who merely looks at one intensely seems more interesting. I expected from all I had heard (and after knowing Mrs. Kameneff, his sister) that he would be abrupt and disagreeable, and was quite nonplussed by his personality. He talked perfect French, asked what I thought about the light, and whether I would like his writing-table moved into some other position.

"Anything can be moved as you wish," he said.

The room was palatial, with great columns, as if it had once been a ballroom. The light was impossible, no matter where or how I placed my stand. As I dragged it across the floor trying every conceivable position, he watched me with a quizzical expression.

"Even in clay I see I have to travel, and I am so tired of travelling," he said, and his voice sounded tired. Presently he asked: "Are you not cold—No? But a fire would *feel* nice." And in answer to the bell a matronly peasant woman appeared. They exchanged a few words and she returned with fuel. He explained that he ordered a fire because he liked this woman to come into the room. "She walks so softly and has such a musical voice."

After the interruption he bent down to his work and I could not see his face. I took advantage of his preoccupation to kneel down with my chin on the opposite end of the writing-table so that I could contemplate him on a level. He looked up suddenly and stared back, a steady unabashed stare. After a few seconds I said I hoped he did not mind. His *galanterie* was almost French!

"I do not mind. I have my *revanche* in looking at you *et c'est moi qui gagne!*"

He then pointed out that he was quite asymmetrical, and snapped his teeth to show that his under jaw was crooked. He had a cleft in his chin, nose and brow, as if his face had been moulded and the two halves had not been accurately joined. Full face he was Mephisto, his eyebrows slanted upwards, and the lower part of his face tapered into a pointed and defiant beard. His eyes were much talked of; they had a curious way of lighting up and flashing like an electric spark; he was alert, active, observant, *moqueur*, with a magnetism to which he must have owed his unique position. It was not simply his services to the revolutionary cause that made him what he was. Zinoviev for his services was installed President of the Petrograd Soviet and of the Third International—big enough posts to satisfy the highest revolutionary ambition, but he never made good. I never heard anyone except Kameneff have a decent word for him. With Trotzki it was different; he also was a Jew, but the Red Army loved him. I heard few criticisms of him, and those few were insignificant. If at any time he appeared in a box at the Opera, the whole house rose simultaneously and cheered him. I was told that his powers of eloquence were miraculous and that it was he who stemmed the Red retreat when Yudenitch nearly reached Petrograd and the army was in a panic.

When I saw him he was a tired man and ill, but his personality was nevertheless vibrant.

In spite of the bad light I tried to make some sort of a start.

"*Vous me caressez avec des instruments d'acier!*" he said as I measured him with the calipers.

After I had battled against the poor light for four hours he said I looked tired and suggested I should come the following evening and try working by electric light, to which I gratefully assented. Meanwhile he ordered tea and had some with me, and we talked pleasantly, as one does when the day's work is done and one can relax. He told me a little about his wanderings in exile during the War, of how at the outbreak of revolution he sailed in a neutral ship from the United States to return to Russia, and of how the British arrested him and kept him in a Canadian concentration camp. He emphasized the fact that he was not going to Britain, nor from a British colony nor in a British ship, and that Britain had no right to lay hands on him.

"But," with a Mephistophelean laugh, "I had a good time in that camp. There were a lot of German sailors on whom I worked successful propaganda. By the time I left they were all good revolutionaries; I still get letters from some of them."

That evening, when Vanderlip asked me what he was like, I could not resist admitting that if Trotzki were less impressive than Lenin, he was at least more human.

The next evening punctually at 6.30 the War Ministry car awaited me. It was covered but not closed, and a driving wind lifted the snow and blew it about like smoke. In the Red Square we punctured. I wrapped my travelling rug around my shoulders and tried to keep out the cold. (The coat that had been promised was not yet forthcoming.)

I arrived late for my appointment and explained why I was too cold immediately to work. Trotzki kissed my frozen hands and placed two chairs for me by the fire, one for me and one for my feet.

When I had melted a little, he said:

"I will make a businesslike contract with you. I promise to stand by the side of your clay for five minutes every half-hour."

Needless to say the five minutes distended, and only the telephone recalled him to his work; even then he would let it ring until its persistence grew annoying, and then courteously: "Have I your permission?"

His manners were charming. He had the ease of a man born to a great position. And yet before the Revolution what was he? An exile in a journalist office in East Side New York. (Americans have assured me he was a waiter—

"A waiter?" I answer. "Never! Why, he would have thrown all the plates at the people's heads!") Having become a statesman, a general, a chief, he had unconsciously evolved a new individuality. However, if Trotzki were not Trotzki, and no one had ever heard of him, one would nevertheless be delighted by his brilliant mind and quick wit.

Nearly everything he said had a double meaning. I seemed to be mentally always lagging behind, unravelling his witticisms. Once when he had been standing next to his effigy for some time, he began to sway. I wondered if he were going to faint.

I begged him, whatever he did, not to fall backwards, or he would fall on my work. He recovered instantly and smiled:

"Have no fear——" he said; "*je tombe toujours en avant!*"

His head was more difficult than any I have done. For a long time it defied all my efforts and persisted in looking like a caricature. The more he gave sittings the more I felt I was not justifying the time he was so preciously giving. Added to which he was very critical, which made me nervous. He wished it to succeed, for he never meant to submit to having his bust done again.

"*Je veux travailler celà avec vous*," he said. But the more he "helped" the more nervous I became, and the more he seemed amused, and finally he observed:

"Even when your teeth are clenched and you are fighting with your work, *vous êtes encore femme*."

I was far too absorbed, however, to be conscious of the impression I created. Every night for a week I worked from seven to midnight, and throughout the day I was preoccupied. Vanderlip noticed my depressed state and tried to give me confidence. He was somewhat of a Christian Scientist:

"It's going to go well," he assured me, "make up your mind it's going to go well. At nine o'clock I shall send out strong thought waves to help you."

Only an artist understands the agony of mind caused by a refractory piece of work! Nobody can help—one has to rely upon one's own efforts. Trotzki would look up from his writing-table at intervals and ask if I needed him—"*Avez-vous besoin de moi?*"—and naturally I took all the time he would give me. He was not as desperately busy as he might have been, for peace had just been declared with Poland and there was reassuring news from the South. It seemed as if the "Wrangel" campaign were nearly over.

After I had undone and re-done the bust without advancing much towards any definite end, he observed humorously that my method caused him satisfaction.

"You shall make this your permanent studio. I like to feel that you are working here. As soon as you really have finished the bust we will destroy it and begin again!"

I said to him, "I had expected you to be most unamiable, and I am so surprised to find you otherwise. I wonder how I will describe you to people in England who think you are a monster."

A mischievous smile (he smiled very rarely) lit up his face.

"Tell them . . ." he said; "tell them that '*lorsque Trotzki embrasse, il ne mord pas!*' "

I revolved this in my mind until he distracted my thoughts by a sudden change of mood.

"Much as I like you and admire you as a woman, I assure you that if I knew you were an enemy, or a danger to our revolutionary cause, I would not hesitate to shoot you down with my own hand."

I admit that I found this vaunted ruthlessness most attractive! One might spend a lifetime in cosmopolitan salons, and not meet anyone who would be capable either of saying or doing what Trotzki threatened!

In the course of conversation I told him how nearly I had gone to the front with Kalinin, and that Kameneff stopped me because he said I could not have borne the discomfort of a troop train: "I would, though, if he had only let me go!" I assured him. Trotzki was quite surprised by my eagerness. "If you want to go to the front, you can come with me," he said quite simply. (He was liable to start any day.)

Miracles did come true, as I knew, and I tried to mask my excitement. He even called up Litvinoff on the telephone. What he said I did not understand, but I learned afterwards that he asked if I were "all right," in other words reliable! Litvinoff evidently gave a satisfactory report, for when, at the end of the evening, I asked Trotzki if he had decided to take me or not, he answered, "The decision rests with you." ("*C'est à vous à décider.*")

It was October 20th, 1920, and the foreign newspapers announced an organized counter revolution. The warning was given most obligingly in time, and steps were taken to frustrate it. The whole town was placarded with notices that inhabitants must not be out after midnight. There were rumours of arrests and executions, but I saw nothing of them. Even Trotzki's car which came to fetch me was stopped by a sentry a whole block away from the War Ministry. It gave one just a small thrill, but nothing eventful happened. Discussing the international situation that evening Trotzki said:

"England is our only real and dangerous enemy."

"Not France?" I asked.

"No. France is just a noisy hysterical woman, but England—is altogether different."

One never knew what mood he would be in, whether sentimental, serious, *moqueur*, witty, or passionately political. There were times when he liked to discuss poetry, the relative merits of Shelley and Byron. He quoted Ruskin in French, and wondered at my appreciation of Swinburne. He thought I was too materialist to care for poetry! (I a materialist!) I said to him:

"One has one's dreams." And he corroborated with a deep sigh:

"Yes, we all have our dreams."

I wondered about his. He said I should remain in Russia and do some big work. I told him how I longed to, but that my children dragged me back. I had had no news of them since I left, "so I shall have to return, but Russia—with its absence of hypocrisy—Russia with its big ideas—has spoilt me for my own world," I said.

"Ah, that is what you say now; but when you are away . . ." he hesitated. Then suddenly turning on me with clenched teeth and flashing eyes, he shook a threatening finger in my face.

"If, when you get back, *vous nous calomniez*, as the rest have, I tell you . . . I will follow you to England, and . . . I will . . ."

He did not finish his threat.

I said: "I am glad you have told me how to get you to England!"

He went on: "It is easy enough here to be blinded *par les saletés et les souffrances*, and to see no further, but people forget there is no birth without pain, and Russia is in the throes of a great *accouchement*."

So we talked until late, and suddenly I looked up at the clock and asked him, "What about this new order—how can I be home at midnight?"

He said: "I will take you myself."

We left at about one o'clock. A soldier with a big holster sat next the driver. Crossing the bridge we were stopped by a group of five soldiers. They looked at the car's permit by the light of the car lamp; they were slow, probably none of them could read. I said:

"Why don't you put your head out of the window and say who you are?"

He said "*Taisez-vous*," rather peremptorily and I sank back rebuked. I never understood this little episode. Even had he been in danger of his life, which was hardly possible, for he was popular with the army, he did not impress me as a man who would be easily intimidated. His excuse afterwards was that he did not wish to be seen driving in the night with a woman. That, however, was a very unconvincing reason; it was just the sort of reason the Soviet principles despised. They had swept aside all such bourgeois attitudes to life!

Of course those five soldiers could easily have pitched him and me too over the bridge, and no one would ever have known who did it!

The last night of work, about half-way through the evening, the electric light went out. On the telephone Trotzki learnt that the lights had failed all over the town. I suggested that perhaps the counter revolution had begun. He asked rather sharply if that was what I desired, and I said it would break the monotony! The English newspapers seemed to have no idea of the monotony of Moscow. By the light of four candles we read a copy of *The Times* that was on his desk, in which there were descriptions of barricades in the streets! Evidently some correspondent had mistaken the object of the stacks of fuel that the tram-cars were daily unloading. I read out loud to him the announcement that he had been seriously wounded and that General Budienny had been court-martialled. Up to that time, with a simplicity that was incredible, I had always believed all that I read in newspapers. This, however, proved an excellent lesson. Trotzki taught me the difference between real news and propaganda. Real news can only be found *in between* the lines!

In the end the bust was a success, and its completion a matter of regret.

To work thus in the quietude of the night when all the world's asleep, to have this quietude assured by a fixed bayonet outside the door, to have as model such a dynamic personality, seemed as unreal as it is unforgettable. He assured me he would preserve always a memory of "*une femme avec une auréole de cheveux et des mains très sales!*" and on parting he asked:

"*Eh bien, on ira ensemble au front?*"

XIII

Why didn't I go? I can still be angry with myself for having missed the chance. I am not given much to missing things; neither fear nor prudence played a part in my decision, and yet . . . there were intrigues and opposition weaving a tangle around me that obscured my clear vision. Vanderlip was chiefly instrumental in thwarting a plan that filled him with jealousy on my account. He brought me messages from the Foreign Office which I could neither trace nor verify, purporting to come from "a reliable source," to the effect that "we cannot prevent Sheridan from going to the front with Trotzki, but we *will* prevent her from leaving the country when she gets back." Whether this were true or purely the invention of Vanderlip I could not at the time ascertain. He assured me that I was regarded with considerable suspicion, but then every foreigner was suspected.

Two evenings later Litvinoff came to me with a message from Trotzki to know if I would be ready to start the next day at four o'clock. I must give an answer in the morning, "Yes" or "No." Litvinoff sat in front of my fire in a big arm-chair and I sat on the hearth and we discussed the project from every aspect. The temptation was almost irresistible. Litvinoff would not advise me; he listened to my arguments, agreed with all of them, those for and those against.

I wrestled in my own mind far into the small hours. When I decided not to go, my intense desire broke back and upset everything. I *knew* that as the only woman on Trotzki's train, I should be conspicuous. I had come to Russia as an artist, and in the face of what seemed insuperable difficulties had accomplished my purpose and was esteemed a serious woman. Might not the good effect be lost if I gave way to this dazzling temptation? It was absurd to suppose that in such a crisis, within sound of the guns, General Budienny would consent to sit to me. My presence would be explained only in one way, and it was a way that might do Trotzki harm as well as myself. In the end I sacrificed a great adventure to a vain convention, and a life-long regret. It was the hardest and most repugnant decision I ever made. At three a.m., when the fire was a mere heap of cinders, I decided to preserve Trotzki as a memory. Then for the first time Litvinoff said, "You are right!"

Forty-eight hours later I heard that Trotzki was still in the town; it was more than I could bear. I hurried to Litvinoff and begged him: "Telephone, quick, quick, that I will go." Litvinoff telephoned but Trotzki's train had left ten minutes earlier.

XIV

A few days later two Communists, one I did not know, the other I hardly knew, fetched me in a car to choose the long-promised coat. Vanderlip told me that unless I managed to secure a sable, he for one would never speak to me again! This threat did not affect me as it was meant to, for since the departure of Trotzki without me, for which I blamed Vanderlip, I spoke to him only on occasions of necessity, such as when we exchanged a new tooth brush for a box of pills.

The two Communists took me to one of the big fur stores, the sort of Révillon of Moscow, which was shuttered and sealed with Soviet seals because it had become "requisitioned" property. We entered by a side door into a dark, cold, cave-like building which resounded with our voices and our footsteps. Then we got into a lift that was like a cage and carried us up to what seemed to be the attic. It was long and low, and coats hung from the ceiling like hundreds of Bluebeard's wives. An old man who looked like Rip van Winkle and spoke German, told me to make my choice.

The young Communists grinned and asked if I were a typical woman or whether I would make my choice quickly. It was too bewildering; I wanted them all! There was a brown Siberian pony lined with ermine, and a broadtail with a sable collar; there were astrakhans and minks, but a row of "shubas" riveted my admiration. A shuba is essentially a Russian garment; it is a big, sleeveless cloak of velvet as ample as an Arab burnous, that reaches to one's feet and is lined with fur. There was a royal blue lined with blue fox, and a golden brown lined with white fox. Rip van Winkle unhooked a wine-coloured velvet, lined with sable and put it round me. It was light as a feather and warm as a nest. I said (despairingly) that I could not walk about the streets in velvet and sable.

They said, "Sable is the privilege of the worker."

Still I hesitated, then someone suggested:

"Take two—take the sable and another more practical coat as well."

I selected a black Siberian pony lined with grey squirrel. It was heavy but warm. Then a black sable stole with all its sable tails was flung around my shoulders, and they asked if I would like it. It seemed to me they were joking; I answered laughingly that I would. Then they produced a long wide ermine stole and asked if I would like that too, and I, still thinking it was a joke, said I would have that, too.

It was not until we got downstairs and they made a bulky newspaper parcel of the lot, that I realized it was not a joke at all. I looked round and wondered whom to thank. Rip van Winkle said:

"You have shared in the government distribution of bourgeois property to the people."

When I got back Vanderlip was waiting for me.

"Well ——?" he asked.

I unwrapped my newspaper bundle and the sables rolled out on to the floor. He exclaimed it was beyond any of his expectations and began to calculate what each was worth in dollars.

When I showed them to Litvinoff he remarked:

"I shall have them taken from you at the frontier!"

XV

Trotzki had said that I must do a bust of Chicherin, and that it was a diplomatic obligation on his part to be done. I did not relish the idea of working at the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (the Hotel Métropole) where the drain smells were such that I climbed the stairs two at a time holding my breath! However, as everything had been arranged I could but consent. There seemed to be no immediate prospect of leaving Moscow, and I had nothing to do.

Litvinoff with a car came and helped me to remove my stand and clay from the Kremlin. We must have made a funny procession. The plaster moulder carried the clay block, Litvinoff in an elegant sealskin-collared coat and cap carried the stand, and I followed with the bucket.

On arrival at the Foreign Office we ran into a Chinese general in full uniform with all his staff! Litvinoff, who was talked of as likely to be the first Soviet representative in China, was embarrassed at being surprised in the rôle of sculptor's assistant, but the Chinese were enormously amused and laughed. Litvinoff then announced my arrival to Chicherin, and I waited in the secretary's room.

While I was waiting a little man in a brown coat and trousers that did not match, shuffled across the office and back again, bent and agitated. Then Litvinoff called me, but the little man in brown confronted me in the doorway. It was Chicherin! He said:

"To-night it is impossible—quite impossible ——" and would not allow me to cross his threshold. Litvinoff protested in Russian but Chicherin just turned his back and bolted like a man in a panic. I followed Litvinoff to his office on another floor and we sat down and looked at one another. He was very much upset and quite at a loss to explain or excuse. I did not mind, except for the useless trouble of moving all the apparatus. I had seen something of the personality of Chicherin and that was worth anything. From this experience and from what Litvinoff told me, I understood that Chicherin was an abnormal man who lived always in the Foreign Office with closed windows and never went out. He insisted on having his bedroom in the building, as he said he had not time to go elsewhere to sleep. He worked at night, and did not always sleep by day. Every detail he attended to himself and did all the things that secretaries should have done for him. He had no idea of time, and would frequently ring up a "comrade" at three or four in the morning for the most trivial information. When Litvinoff advised him to get someone extra in his office to get his papers straight, he agreed, but stipulated that "it must be someone who works during the day so that he is free at night."

The necessity of an interval for sleep never occurred to him. He had been described to me as a man of wonderful character. Those who worked with him loved him, even though he nearly killed them. I only saw a fluttering agitated bird. It was, as I heard afterwards, an unfortunate day, for Chicherin had been to the dentist. Someone who watched him from an office window described to me the phenomenon of Chicherin in the street. He stood at the corner of the kerb hesitating, as one might on the brink of a river on a cold day before plunging in. When he finally ventured he got half-way across and ran back. What with the traffic, the fresh air and the dentist, he was thoroughly unnerved.

The next day he sent me a message inviting me to start work at four o'clock in the morning, as this was his quietest time. I sent back word that unfortunately it was my quietest time too!

XVI

There seemed no reason now for lingering. I had done my work and might as well go home. But to get out of Russia was far more complicated than to get in. My passport had been removed from me ever since I arrived, and it seemed to require Kameneff's presence to get it back. Litvinoff said:

"What's the hurry?" and Vanderlip said:

"Wait for me."

And so time passed which I devoted to visiting museums.

I had a charming friend, a fellow-sculptor called Nicholas Andrév, who had leisure. Although he was not a Bolshevik he had a good many government orders, but did not work much, because conditions, he said, were too difficult. He could not heat his studio, and he was forbidden by law to keep a servant, so he had to do his own cleaning and cooking. For an intellectual that made life impossible. He never grumbled, however, for it was his nature always to laugh at everything and everybody. He cared not a rap about political vagaries and took life philosophically as it came, shrugging his shoulders at discomforts, and said those who ran away were fools, and that he could never live in any other country because he adored his Russian winter. He wandered about the Kremlin with a *Je m'en fichiste* air, opening all sorts of doors quite regardless of permits or sentries, and together we explored corners that I never would have dared to investigate alone. Oh! the dark passages and the stuffy smells. The air seemed to belong to bygone ages.

Once we wandered into the Palace, opened more doors, and after some conversation with men in an office, one of them took us through the armoury to a museum, where jewels were displayed and I saw the Romanoff crowns, set with precious stones. (I wonder how many are supposed to have been sold to America?) There were sceptres, and horse harness and trappings all jewel studded, a coach given by

Queen Elizabeth of England, and the finest collection of English Charles II silver in the world, as well as a quantity of old silver and gold chalices that had recently been collected from the churches and were in process of being catalogued.

In the colossal over-decorated throne room of the Romanoffs in which the Third International had held its last meeting, there were still hangings of red bunting and appeals to the workers of the world to unite, concerning which Andrév chose to be facetious. The old apartments of the Czars were simply a divine dream. There were exquisite small rooms with vaulted ceilings and frescoed walls that had evidently inspired the stage scenery of the Russian ballet.

From the Kremlin we went to the house of Madame Shucken, who met us at the door and glowered at us as she did at all the visitors whom she was obliged to admit on government-appointed visiting days. If looks could have killed we should certainly have dropped dead! Mr. Shucken had fled to Paris, leaving his wife to face the new music! The government with surprising sense had left the pictures in the house to which they belonged. There is, I believe, no such modern collection in France. The first room was full of Claude Monets and Whistlers, leading to another room full of Dégases, Renoirs and Cézannes. There were twenty-one Matisses in a room, and twenty Gauguins in another. A curious intermixture was William Morris's tapestry and Burne Jones's "Nativity." When we came out into the street everything in it seemed to have been transformed into a Matisse! Especially a doorway in the snow rudely painted in blotches of green and yellow with a sentry standing near. Andrév agreed that one only had to borrow another's eyes and the same old world appeared quite new. I remembered that after I had been in Florence a few days every woman I saw looked like a Madonna.

On the way home in the evening we passed by a bronze statue of Gogol, and Andrév said:

"What do you think of it? Everyone says it is very bad."

Happily I said I thought it was very good, as it turned out to be Andrév's work! He was less flattering about my busts. He said they were "Journalism, not art." I replied that there was art in journalism, and we left it at that.

XVII

When Litvinoff got back from his office in the afternoon he usually brought a large portfolio and worked in my room. I then gleaned all sorts of gossip about the Conferences. Sometimes he was worried because things did not go as he wanted them to. One night when he was leaving for a special meeting he said:

"I'm in for a fight. I want to get something passed that Lenin is going to oppose."

Lenin of course won, as I heard the next day. "He always wins!" said Litvinoff grimly; and then a few days later he admitted, "Now it is proved that Lenin was right. Lenin is always right."

The only anxious moment I experienced during the whole visit was when shortly before my departure, Litvinoff, with a face like a mask, asked me, in between puffs of cigarette smoke, whether I knew a certain person in England called —— "Melbourne." The way he asked it produced a shiver down my spine and a void in the back of my head.

" . . . And did you know," he proceeded, "that he is in the Intelligence Service?"

"He works in a city office," I refuted.

"But he *was* in the Intelligence Service," he persisted.

"I believe he was during the War," I admitted.

Litvinoff smoked on in silence; his small eyes scrutinized me till I felt I was the author of a murder. I did not know whether to look concerned or unconcerned. What did his questions imply? I tried to draw him, but he merely remarked:

"I am a better friend to you than you know. I will tell you some day—perhaps in ten years' time!"

That evening Kameneff unexpectedly walked into my room. He had just returned from the front. I hardly recognized him; he had not shaved for a month, his face was completely hairy, he looked like a bear, but he was in great spirits because the Crimean campaign was nearly finished. We discussed my departure. He suggested that I accompany the Minister of Railways, Lomonosoff, who was leaving in a few days on a special train, but first he said the price of my heads must be decided and that he would leave to Litvinoff. I said that I did not expect to be paid, that my work was my method of earning my keep. He would not hear of this, however, and said that Soviet principles did not allow of the exploitation of workers. When we were alone, Kameneff said to me:

"Well, did I keep my promises?"

I tried to make suitable and appreciative reply. I said that everything had been fulfilled, had in fact exceeded my expectations.

He cut me short.

"We are glad to have amongst us *une femme artiste*, your nationality and your relations are nothing to us, there is only one thing that we cannot stand ——" and for the first time since I had known him his face adopted a hard expression, he got up and moved towards the window in an abstract way and looked out.

"The only thing we cannot stand . . ." he continued, without looking at me, "*c'est l'espionnage!*"

It was only a passing shadow, and the next moment he was back at my side, telling me that he regarded me as a woman of courage for having ventured:

"But when I saw you on the departure platform with two small handbags, I knew you were no ordinary woman."

And then he fumbled in an inner pocket and produced his *carnet*.

"I must not forget," he said, and handed me my hundred pound note. I pushed it back.

"For my keep," I said. But he shook his head.

"You were our guest."

XVIII

On the morning of November 6th I was told that Lomonosoff's train would leave that night. (In Russia one makes no plans, things happen when they happen.) Accordingly I distributed my belongings with a recklessness that nearly proved disastrous. To a friend of Andrév's who had been kind to me I left all my soap, and some toilet paper. To the maids in the house, my goloshes, workbag, fur-lined dressing-jacket, gloves and hat. To Rothstein my hot-water bottle and medicine chest. There remained to me the clothes I stood up in; my two valises were filled with sables. When the hour of departure arrived, the maids kissed my hands and wept, and Rothstein accompanied me to the front door.

"You have been a brick," he said, "you have played up splendidly, you have never complained." (What could I have complained of except the food, which was no one's fault?)

Litvinoff, who had an open car to convey me to the station, said: "This house is your Moscow home; the next time you come you will bring your children."

We drove away from No. 14 Sofiskaya Nabereshnaya in the bright light of a full moon, glittering stars and a hard frost. We stopped at the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to pick up my passport. There we learnt that my big cases containing my heads which were to have been conveyed to the train were still in the Kremlin. His organization had miscarried, it was "somebody's" fault. The lorry driver said he had waited for them for three hours, but the sentry had refused to give them up. In three quarters of an hour the train was due to start.

As it was the anniversary of the Revolution, everyone was at the Opera House to hear Lenin speak. All telephoning was therefore futile. We drove to the Kremlin and the building which had always been so crowded and busy was now deserted and resonant. I still had my pass which enabled us to get past the sentry. I unlocked the door of my workroom, and there were the two great coffin-shaped cases lying sealed with Soviet seals. I tried to lift one end; they were far beyond our combined strengths to carry, nor could the car have taken them. I was in despair. Litvinoff said "stay." I had visions of staying perhaps indefinitely, having parted with everything except what I stood in.

I looked round at the beloved Kremlin; it seemed more beautiful than ever, more still and more impassive. The clock in the old Spassky tower that chimed complainingly, announced a quarter to seven. There was just fifteen minutes. We returned to the car, it pulsed, grunted and stopped. Then it pulsed and grunted again. It was missing badly. Litvinoff said:

"You'll *have* to stay."

The chauffeur tinkered, the machine pulsed, grunted, and then started. The way lay down hill, perhaps we would get there. We reached the station at seven and I gathered up all I could in each hand and ran towards the only train in the station. Litvinoff shouted:

"You needn't run!"

And indeed he was right. It was not the right train. Lomonosoff's "special" did not come in for half an hour, and did not start until two hours later. Had we but known there would have been time to fetch the "coffins," and I could have attended the meeting and heard Lenin speak. But no one could tell, one had simply to be philosophical. Litvinoff promised to send the cases by courier to Reval, and they would still be in time to catch the Stockholm boat. Then he said good-bye and repeated:

"Some day you shall know—but you may have to wait ten years or so."

Professor Lomonosoff was carrying six and a half million pounds in gold to Germany to buy locomotives. The train was accompanied by an armed guard. For many hours the first night we stopped because there had been an accident on the line and it took time to clear. Periodically the axle of the gold car would break or the oil-box take fire. There was a superfluity of food, however, and we ate as we had not eaten for months (which sudden overfeeding created the most painful digestive disorders!) Lomonosoff was a poor kind of a Bolshevik and did not care who knew it. I wondered what the servants on the train must think of this high living. I asked them. They were unanimous in preferring the exterior to the interior conditions of their country! The lower classes are sadly influenced by their stomachs.

I was dreadfully sad at leaving, and yet I wanted to leave. There were conflicting reasons, but Russia had affected me profoundly. I was returning to a world for which I was to be unfitted for a long time.

XIX

On arrival at Stockholm (after the Swedish port authorities had subjected me to a search, not for contraband but for insects!) to my surprise and bewilderment I was suddenly besieged by newspaper reporters. They left me no time to eat. (I did want to eat!) I blurted out my impressions smilingly and regardless of all political *arrière pensée.* The result was that the chief Conservative paper published my declaration that Trotzki was a perfect gentleman! I was sure I had never used any such qualifying adjective to describe a man who was a genius, a superman or a devil! No doubt the editor meant well, but I was much embarrassed.

I was also carried off in a motor by strange men to a movie studio and filmed. Later I saw myself on the screen at Marble Arch among the news items! I had not the faintest idea why I was treated in this way and wondered if the same reception awaited me in England.

The boat from Göteborg to Newcastle was delayed twenty-four hours by a violent storm. As I lay in my half-dark cabin I reflected on my Russian venture, on all that Kameneff had predicted concerning it, of the historical interest that attached to it, etc. Would anyone really be interested, I wondered. The British are so frigid and phlegmatic, so indifferent. And my family, how would they receive me? Three letters only had I received, and they arrived by courier from London, dispatched by Shane through the Soviet office. They had been opened and read by God knows what censor. Shane wrote: "We count on your wits to bring you safely back to us." One was from Margaret, who sent her "love to Lenin and Trotzki and their wives," and a sentimental one from my mother saying, "I forgive you, darling, as I would even if you had committed a murder." There was not a word from my father.

As soon as the ship arrived at Newcastle, at midnight, I was not left long in doubt as to the accuracy of Kameneff's predictions. Reporters who said they had come from London and had been waiting two days clamoured for interviews. They were more especially in a hurry because they had to telephone their news to London in time for the morning papers. The *Times* representative handed me a letter from Shane imploring me to be careful what I said, not to "talk red," or I should be "done for," not to give away good material in interviews and not to dispose of my diary until I had seen him.

Meanwhile the customs officer who was most abrupt and unpleasant, treated me as if I were an undesirable alien. He insisted upon opening the great coffin-shaped cases, although I assured him they contained nothing but the heads of Lenin and Trotzki. He dived his arms elbow deep in straw and shavings as if it were a bran pie. I said:

"I've no scent or tobacco—we don't get those things in Russia."

"*That* is not what we are looking for," he answered severely.

It never occurred to me till later that perhaps he was searching for propaganda pamphlets or Russian crown jewels!

Whilst both customs officers and reporters were demanding my attention the hour of the train's departure was approaching. Finally the cases were nailed down again and I accepted a reporter's invitation to drive with him from the quay to the station. Then another man met me with a kodak and a flashlight.

"Have I really done something interesting?" I asked the *Daily Mail.* He jerked his head and smiled. "*I should say!*"

XX

It is difficult to describe the mixed reception that awaited me. The praise, the blame, the compliments, the abuse, the eulogy and the criticism. Hardly had I set foot in my studio before Shane appeared. From him I learnt of the family's rage over my departure, and that he was held responsible. Winston would never speak to me again. As for my father, he had expressed the pious hope that my throat might be cut in Moscow, as the only possible vindication of the family's honour.

Then Peter arrived and corroborated all that Shane had said, adding lurid details. The morning papers had published my interviews with large headlines, and as we talked we were constantly interrupted by telephone calls from newspaper photographers, asking for appointments. The door bell rang so persistently that finally it was decided to leave the door open.

"Melbourne" appeared, in a great hurry; he had rushed up to St. John's Wood, which was in the opposite direction to his office, in order to secure my diary.

"You *have* kept a diary?" he asked.

"Of course I have."

"Give it to me!"

Shane also wanted it, he had promised to show it to the editor of the *Times.* "Melbourne" was going to lunch that very day with Northcliffe. That satisfied Shane.

"Let him have it," he said.

"I can't—it's all scribbled in pencil untidily—it wants re-writing."

"That's no matter."

"But there are private bits ——"

"That's no matter either!"

I unpacked it from among my sables. "Melbourne" snatched it and disappeared through the door, leaving me still protesting:

"Bits are private ——"

In the afternoon he came back to tell me that the *Times* had taken it, and were getting it typed. I might not even re-write it.

I groaned, "What will people think?" as I recalled all sorts of twaddle and sob stuff that I would gladly have suppressed. "Melbourne," however, was quite sure the *Times* were the best judges. Something else, however, was on my mind that obliterated for a moment the problem of my diary. I extracted from my bag a hundred pound note.

"Pay that back, wherever it belongs . . ." I said.

"Don't bother," he answered.

"It's no bother, I've got fifteen hundred *now!*"

"You'll have five hundred more when your diary's published."

"All the more reason then ——"

"Wait, I'll find out."

The next day my diary occupied a full column of the editorial page of the *Times.* Placards at the street corners announced, "Mrs. Sheridan's Diary," in letters of purple. It continued to be so published for five days, and as "Melbourne" had predicted, I received a hundred pounds a day. All the city clerks read it in the omnibuses and the Tube on their way to work. I boarded both during the "rush" hours to watch them doing it!

My father after this came up to London and vouchsafed me a few words of greeting grudgingly; he was suffering from a complex of pride and prejudice.

Meanwhile the unknown source from which my first hundred pounds had come refused, "Melbourne" said, to take it back. He brought me, however, an unexpected request from the Foreign Office that I would go and report myself. I was not unwilling to do so; in fact the idea intrigued me. What did they want me for, I wondered? Lord —— was the head of an "Information about Russia" bureau. I called upon him on the day and at the hour indicated. This charming, grey-haired, suave, old gentlemen, tall and dignified, slightly bent, with a half-shy, half-assured manner, admitted that he only wanted, out of curiosity, to see the author of the adventure. After a few minutes he turned to a young man and told him to send for someone whose name I did not catch.

A rather self-assured anæmic young man arrived, who reminded me of that type of English intellectual known at Eton as tugs and saps; men who take scholarships at schools and universities, and are often quite unfitted for anything in after-life except the drudgery work of chancelleries. This one (he may or may not have been such an one—but that was the impression he conveyed) sat himself unceremoniously on a corner of the big long table that looked like a committee table, and with legs dangling, asked me one or two cursory questions. What, for instance, were the things I did *not* publish? I assured him I had published *everything*. Lord —— rather nervously suggested that I should tell my impression of Trotzki. The young man with dangling legs answered for me. He held forth at some length, telling us of Trotzki's personality and character. He had never seen him, but he knew. Trotzki, he said, was a monstrous creature, vindictive by nature, hideous in appearance and repugnant to women!

I listened, indeed there was no other alternative, and when the young man had finished on this and several other points I said good-bye, and Lord —— thanked me so much for coming and for my interesting information!

It was during the first week of my arrival that the Islingtons asked me to a dance. I think it must have been Anne Islington's sense of mischief that made her do this. I sensed trouble, and took "Melbourne" on the solemn promise that he would not leave my side. No sooner did we appear in the ballroom doorway than some woman whose house I had often stayed in, exclaimed in a loud voice:

"Oh! There's the Bolshevik!" and turned her back.

Strangely enough those who had the right to be angry with me appeared to be least so. I refer to Wolkoff, the Imperial ex-diplomat, who shook me by the hand, and Natalie Ridley, the daughter of Benckendorf, late Russian Ambassador. But strangest of all, a white-faced, sunken-eyed young man kept following me through the rooms, staring at me with intensity, and finally asked to be presented. It was the Grand Duke Dmitri. We sat out several dances, while for a moment those who had adopted lofty, high-handed attitudes were grouped in the doorway straining to see and to listen.

What a curious impression he made upon me, this boy accomplice of Rasputin's assassin! He was so good looking, so frail and tired, so princely and yet so simple, so emotional and *exalté*, so typically the Russian aristo! How he squirmed mentally as I answered all his questions with frank descriptions. How deathly pale his face, and how his long white hands trembled as he lit a cigarette. All that I told him hurt him, but he wanted to know, and I even had the sensation that he enjoyed the pain. In that he resembled what I had seen of the Russian people. He enjoyed the spiritual flagellation, the moral martyrdom, and I too derived a sadistic joy in hurting him! His eyes had extraordinary dramatic quality. It seemed as if through them all the dead of Russia were looking at me reproachfully.

If my life was hateful in public, it was hellish in private. My father's face of mute suffering and resentment cast a gloom whenever I appeared. My aunts scolded and reproached me on every occasion and referred provokingly to my "bloody Bolshevik friends." I was constantly forced into hectic defence of the people who had so hospitably shared with me their meagre means. It was not until I had exhausted myself in indignation and anger that I learnt to hold my peace, and turn a deaf ear to the ignorant nonsense that was hurled at me on every side. To the world, Jennie Churchill adopted a loyal defence of me, her attitude being that she could abuse me if she wished, but nobody else should. She fought my battles and said that I would have been a fool not to go, and that any of her friends would have gone if the chance had offered.

Leonie Leslie tells the story of someone scandalized because I "didn't even take a maid!" At the end of a week London had made me far more Bolshevik than ever Moscow.

This period was a turning point in my life. Friends (so-called) dropped away as leaves in a first frost. A few old friends clung loyally and became doubly precious. Many new friends replaced the lost ones. On one occasion, when I was alone in the studio, I opened the front door in answer to a knock. There stood a big shabbily dressed man with a cloth cap pulled down over his eyes, a handkerchief tied round his neck; he had a beard of a few weeks' growth. The effect was of a stage burglar. He asked me if I was at home. I said I was not. His accent was undefinably Irish or Scotch. He then said that he was sorry because we had mutual friends in Moscow. Thereupon I said, "Come in!" It was Gallacher, the English Communist, who was in hiding from the police.

A good many Labour leaders came to see me, and I started to do a head of George Lansbury, at the request of some of them. He came several times a week and stayed for a couple of hours at a time. I was happier and more at ease with these sorts of people than in Society, which treated me so capriciously and uncertainly. Krassin came quite often, usually in the evenings on his way home from the office to his house in St. John's Wood. He treated me as a trusted friend and seemed above petty and mean suspicion. Perhaps the explanation of this is simply that he was Siberian. Incidentally, he was the only person who, instead of asking me my impressions of Moscow, asked me my impression of London on my return! I told him that the shops seemed to me particularly stupid. So full of nonessentials. The fact that I had seen no shop-windows and had only two dresses to wear alternately for three months had not made me desire to buy. On the contrary, the things I used to think necessary I no longer wanted. Krassin smiled and nodded sagely. He said it was due to a new sense of values.

"I remember," he said, "I felt much the same when I returned to the world after being exiled in Siberia. I missed the simplicity and the inspiration of my Siberian life, and civilization seemed quite senseless."

I was very much surprised by this statement. He said it in a kind of retrospective tone of regret, as if he recalled a past that had been beautiful. This was quite contrary to all one had ever read or heard of Siberian exile. Was it a less dreadful state than it had been depicted? Have Russian political exiles received a world sympathy that they do not require? Krassin's simple statement has often made me wonder.

Meanwhile I was in a very unsettled and tormented state. My notoriety was terrific, but it was not the sort of notoriety that was going to help my future, which depended upon rich patrons, and these mostly adopted the attitude that they would not have their portraits done by the sculptor of Lenin and Trotzki. (Much the same would, I suppose, have happened to the sculptor of Marat and Robespierre had there been such a person.)

I might have kept quiet and "lived it down," my family said, but I did not consider I had anything to live down. I was smarting under a great injustice. I regarded my critics as fools, and became more hardened and more in revolt. Fisher, who was originally responsible for having arranged my meeting with the Soviet delegates, once more came to my rescue. I confided to him the situation that had arisen and my resentment.

"What shall I do?" I asked. His mind worked clearly.

"Go to America!"

I had all the publicity so necessary for the purpose, and I had best go before public interest cooled. (My *London Times* articles had been sold simultaneously to the *New York Times.*) To this end he led me to Mr. Curtis Brown. The sequel was not long in unravelling. A cable from Lee Keedick offered me a lecture tour in the United States, all expenses paid, including my journey to New York in the *Aquitania,* sailing after Christmas. I had two weeks in which to make ready. In his cable Lee Keedick asked if my voice could fill Carnegie Hall. I knew nothing of Carnegie Hall, but I surmised that I could if necessary fill any hall! I had never spoken in my life, but I accepted the offer by return of cable, on chance. What one must, one can. As a preliminary trial I accepted to speak at the Browning Club somewhere in the East End, to an audience of workers. I did not realize until I started to go there in a taxi what an agony it was going to be. I took both children with me and sipped neat brandy all the way. When I got to the platform I was terrified.

The Chairman presented me and said a few introductory words. I looked at my audience as if they were the lions to whom I was to be thrown. Then the Chairman sat down, there was applause—a silence—I had to stand up. I faced them, all eyes were fixed on me. If I had been waiting for the shooting party to fire I could not have felt more desperate. My breath came short—my heart beat double-quick time.

But they were a kindly people, they listened, and they did not cough nor fidget. Sometimes they laughed. That was deliciously encouraging, and once there were tears in some eyes. Then—I forgot the sound of my own voice, I got carried away by my subject, time passed very quickly. Forty minutes were over in no time—at the end they not only applauded but surged up to the platform, shook me firmly and strongly by the hand, and before I knew it I was in the body of the hall surrounded! I had proved that I could speak.

Meanwhile two weeks remained in which to recover my Soviet heads from the foundry and despatch them back to Moscow.

Lenin, on my own initiative, I had carved in marble. At that time the only other bust in the marble carver's workshop was one of the Prince of Wales, done by an A.R.A., who specialized in copying photographs. In the dim light of a late afternoon these two marbles, side by side, were in most amusing contrast. The stern, sombre brooding Slav face of Lenin and the little bent head and girl-like prettiness of the Prince. I begged Rigamonte to let me photograph his workshop, but he winked knowingly and shook his head.

"No, you would publish it and I should be ruined!" he said.

A week before I was due to sail, Margaret, who was in the house of my sister-in-law, with whom she was going to live while I was in America, suddenly had to be operated on for appendicitis. I forgot America, and was demented with anxiety. The operation was successful, but I had to drag myself away before she was up, and abandon her to hospital nurses. All sorts of memories of Elizabeth were evoked by this, and once when she was asleep and the nurse was out of the room, I knelt by her bed and wept bitterly. I hated leaving her, I dreaded going to America, I longed to turn back from the road I had chosen, but it was too late.

"What I *must*, I *can*!"

It was one of those hideous moments in life that one cannot bear to re-live, even in memory.

I gave myself barely sufficient time in London to get a visa for the United States and pack. I had decided to take Dick with me; I could not face it alone. Then someone came to see me who advised me not to take him, it meant adding a third person to attend to him.

"You do not know the cost of American hotels," I was told.

I therefore cancelled two berths and spent a sleepless night, deriving scant comfort from the knowledge that I was sensible. Dick was five years old, the divinest age and . . . well, I sent down to the Cunard office and re-ordered the extra berths.

A hitch then occurred: for some mysterious reason the granting of my visa was delayed, and the delay grew into a refusal. To be refused a visa for the United States was perturbing indeed. Had my Russian journey really cost me this?

Aunt Jennie Churchill intervened, but the United States Consul was politely adamant. The Ambassador then appealed to, shook off the responsibility by suggesting that the cause lay with the British Foreign Office. Meanwhile time was slipping by, the ship was to sail on the morrow. I was advised to cancel my sailing—the Cunard Company were informed of my dilemma and were most civil, the one bright spot in a very dark hour.

In all haste Jennie went to the Foreign Office and ascertained the root of the trouble. I had a "dossier." Actually I had been honoured to that extent! My "dossier" reported that (my studio having been watched by detectives ever since my return from Moscow) Mr. Lansbury had been to see me frequently and had remained for a long while each time! Now the argument deduced was as follows:

Mr. Lansbury had something to do with the *Daily Herald.* The *Daily Herald* was supposed to be subsidized at that time by Moscow. Conclusion, the *Daily Herald* was in the pay of Moscow, so George Lansbury must be in the pay of Moscow—and as I had just come from Moscow we must be hatching some plot together!

Such are the workings of the official mind.

Jennie explained (I forget if her amusement overcame her indignation) that Mr. Lansbury was sitting for his bust, not hatching plots, and that the bust was the reason of his many and prolonged visits. Apparently this simple explanation of an otherwise suspicious situation completely satisfied the Foreign Office, and they communicated to this effect with the American Consulate. I was then summoned before the Consul himself; he looked at me smilingly.

"I must admit," he began, "you are not my idea of a Bolshevik!" and he gave me my visa with apologies.

The next day I sailed. Jennie was at the station to say good-bye. She was so sweet and gentle at that moment, so sorry I was going, and realized that she and everyone had been rather hard on me. She looked so beautiful that morning, and wistful. She put her arm through mine as we walked down the long platform and said:

"Remember if you are not happy come straight back, we are all here to open our arms to you."

I did not know that I was never destined to see her again.

Peter came to Liverpool and put us on the ship. He felt as when I married, that he was losing me. It was a drastic "cutting adrift," a severance from my own world. No one knew, least of all I myself, when or if I would come back. I was going to my mother's country and I might—who knows?—remain. There seemed to be no daylight ahead. It was like groping in the dark. My life in England was at an end—the future was uncertain, I was going forth into the blue, an emigrant, but with Dick's small hand, thank God, in mine.

PART SEVEN

AMERICA

I

RUSSIA, WITH HER MYSTICISM, her art, her romance, her martyrdom, had seized my imagination. Russia had affected me to a far greater degree than ever Italy when I was a girl. My reaction to Italy had been purely sensual; my reaction to Russia was sensual but artistic also, and almost religious. Russia has been known to affect people in such a way before.

The world said I was Bolshevik. If Bolshevism, however, had been my obsession, I would have found an outlet for my passion by linking on to international forces outside Russia. Nevertheless, I both endured and revelled in the Bolshevik label. At times I even persuaded myself it was true. A Bolshevik personality was all the easier to assimilate, as ever since my childhood my spirit had been in revolt. The first seed was implanted the day my governess beat me before the housemaid. It was fostered by the invasion of my father's house by bailiffs. It was aggravated by the death of Wilfred in the War, and cemented by the attitude of my family and friends on my return from Moscow. A really genuine erudite Bolshevik, however, would have scorned my Bolshevism, and I doubt whether if there had been a revolution in England I should have found my place. This preface is to explain the spiritual unfitness in which I landed in New York City.

I was met by Mr. Lee Keedick, my lecture manager, who dug me out from among a crowd of reporters and took me aside to give me advice as to how to proceed in order to attract a maximum of publicity. He had advertised me, he said, and it was up to me to keep it going.

I was advertised! That was my first shock. I felt no longer human, but a sort of commercial concern. I had not realized that a lecture tour in the United States necessitated this sort of boosting. Publicity that was spontaneous was a kind of testimony of achievement and had a certain prestige, but where, I wondered, was the merit in paid advertisement?

In an over-heated sitting-room at the Biltmore Hotel the nightmare unrolled. My manager said I must place myself at the disposal of interviewers. They arrived at all hours, together and separately, and they all asked the same question: "Tell us about Lenin and Trotzki," until I thought that from the mere boredom of the word Bolshevism must die! As I sat opposite the ——teenth questioner who eyed me with pencil and notebook, observing my clothes and the colour of my eyes, and demanding a "story," I realized that there simply was not enough material in me to go round. I had told all there was to tell in the *New York Times* articles. I racked my brains for a new aspect of the Lenin-Trotzki complex, but I felt myself rapidly becoming inane. There was a perpetual accompaniment of telephone rings. Decisions to make: would I—yes or no—accept such and such invitation or engagement? Someone broke into an interview by asking on the telephone whether Trotzki had "blue eyes or brown"—"because," said the inquirer, "I was in Moscow and I saw somebody who answers your description of Trotzki, and I would like to know whether perhaps I did see him . . . but the man I saw had blue eyes!"

The —— press were waiting to photograph me by flashlight, the *Christian Monitor* and the *Jewish Journal* representatives were awaiting their turn. Friends of my father asked me to "book" a dinner, Mr. Otto Kahn offered me an opera box, a cousin of my mother's wanted to see me "just for an instant!"

Dick, who was used to a quiet nursery life and lots of open air, began to be too big for the room. I held my head in my hands—the nervous tension got hold of us both. We finally clutched at each other's hair, and the gentleman who was waiting to hear on the telephone the colour of Trotzki's eyes probably heard our screams.

If I went out to lunch, a reporter accompanied me in a taxi to my destination interviewing me the while.

Sometimes I found that the invitation I had accepted led me to a palatial house where women in casino dresses, plumed hats and pearls, had been gathered together in a "hen luncheon," and we ate by electric light, and there was real lace for a tablecloth. These women always got on to the subject of Russia, and all they could say or think of was "the poor Czar"!

Every evening I put on a dinner-dress and waited to be called for. Sometimes the dinner-dress proved appropriate to the occasion but sometimes not, and I never knew beforehand, because I was too bewildered or too tired to find out. One night I put on a crimson velvet and ermine. I was fetched by a gentleman in a tweed suit and taken to a room that seemed to be underground. Everyone wore day clothes and we ate our supper on our laps! I was in what America calls "radical" company, and radical in America almost meant Bolshevik, or what was known as "parlour Bolshevik" (a refined variety). Never shall I forget what a fool I felt in my ridiculous clothes, but for which I might have been pleasantly in my element.

II

My first lecture was to a packed Æolian Hall. I floundered courageously, and it was my ignorance of the country and its people that gave me the courage to skate on thin ice. In a trembling voice (I was far more frightened even than on the Browning Club occasion in London) I described my arrival in Moscow, and of Mrs. Kameneff meeting her husband at the station and upbraiding him—I was going to say for having brought an artist half across Europe to do portraits of busy men in such a crisis—but before I could finish my sentence someone with a quick sense of humour chuckled, and the rest of the audience took it up, and the whole house laughed, and went on laughing. They laughed all the more at my discomfiture. I stood there facing them foolishly and it seemed an eternity before I was allowed to go on. But the ice was broken and after that my voice no longer trembled. Of course there was a large "radical" element and they were sympathetic. When I began about Trotzki I forgot everything and got carried away. I described him as a man of wit and fire and genius, a Napoleon of peace. And as I talked I become conscious of the eye of an unknown person in the crowd fixed upon mine, at whom I all unknowingly was staring in return. It brought me back to myself. I hesitated, realizing that I had said too much, that I was perhaps ridiculous—and I stammered shyly:

"I—I won't say any more about Trotzki." In reply to which:

"Go on!" was shouted at me from all sides.

When it was all over people of all kinds flocked to the footlights to talk with me. There was one woman with a dramatic face who shook my hand and said:

"Let me thank you for being so fair and unprejudiced. I am a Communist, I am about to serve my sentence."

My second lecture was equally full, but it was in the afternoon instead of evening and the audience was different. There were fewer Radicals and more leisured women. They were slightly less sympathetic. One of these, with a formidable presence, came up to me afterwards and asked if I was in favour of the same methods prevailing in the United States as in Russia. I was fiercely indignant, and told her that she had no right to ask me such a direct political question. My anger seemed to surprise her, for she apologized and melted away.

One night I had to speak at the Twentieth Century Club in Brooklyn. When I asked what sort of an audience I should have to talk to—(meaning would it be radical, reactionary, artistic or Semitic)—I was told they would be "ladies and gentlemen"! Thus illumined, I trimmed my sails accordingly. I dined first with some people who had a very beautiful Sir Joshua. It was a nude Bacchante, at whose feet a little faun played the flute. My hostess observing my interest in it, said in a rather apologetic tone:

"I confess I am very fond of it, though I never should have thought I could have a nude in my drawing-room, especially with a daughter growing up!"

My lecture at Pittsburg was a dismal failure. All Mr. Lee Keedick's efforts to advertise me were futile. The Pittsburg press seemed to have a *parti pris* against me. Industrial Pittsburg was not interested in Lenin and Trotzki! The workers would have been, but the tickets were beyond their price.

The charming professor of history, James, of Pittsburg University, introduced me to a great, cold, three-quarter empty hall. There is just one thing worse than facing a crowded house, and that is facing an empty one. It was an awful ordeal. I realized how much one depends upon the sympathy of one's audience. Or perhaps its hostility, for I remember election meetings at which speakers were aroused into splendid fury by interruptions. But this was a small cold indifferent audience, and, oh, the boredom of repeating the story of my trip to Moscow—I told it in halting tones, forgetting much by the way. I stumbled over my sentences and had lapses of memory. I wanted to stop. It was a fearful temptation to behave like a temperamental artist and simply say, "I can't." But with a stern sense of duty I struggled on.

My return to New York on the night train was my first experience of American sleeping-cars, and a more uncomfortable and sleepless night it would be hard to imagine. How the comfort-loving Americans can stand such methods of night travel it is hard to understand.

Mr. Lee Keedick was very disappointed and much perturbed by my Pittsburg failure. To him it was unaccountable. He tried, nevertheless, to fix up a Washington lecture, but strangely enough he could not secure a hall. Whatever he tried to do he found himself checkmated. Such a thing had never happened to him before. At Philadelphia, the same result. I understood at once, but guileless Mr. Keedick was at a loss. He was accustomed to exploit normal personalities such as Philip Gibbs, Chesterton, Drinkwater, etc., concerning whom no political problems could arise.

The hopelessness of going on lecturing about Moscow was evident to me. I longed to be released from my contract. I consulted Mr. Bernard Baruch, an outstanding figure amid the mass of strangers whom I had met, whose kindliness and understanding prompted me to turn to him for advice. He was sure I could get out of my contract and urged me to do so; he even thought Mr. Keedick might be glad! And so it happened. Mr. Keedick released me and we parted with mutual compliments and goodwill.

III

With intense relief I now faced the world as a sculptor instead of a lecturer. That public nightmare had, however, served a purpose: the advertising efforts of Mr. Keedick added to my accumulative publicity were of great assistance to my sculpture career. Mr. Archer Huntingdon, a friend of my family's, offered me an exhibition at the Numismatic Society's gallery, owned by him. I had brought, besides my Soviet heads, a great many others, which made the nucleus of a good exhibit. At the same time Mr. Colin Agnew lent me a little flat in Fifty-sixth street, belonging to the firm. I got to know all my fellow artists: Paul Manship, Jo Davidson, Mrs. Whitney, Hans Deidrich, Bob Chandler and heaps of others. McEvoy also was in New York at that time and Harrington Mann.

My *Times* articles introduced me into a journalistic and literary *milieu*, where I met one who was destined to alter my life for me. This was Herbert Swope, the foreign editor of the *New York World.* A man of cyclonic personality and energy with a capacity for work unrivalled *even* among New Yorkers. He was like a leader of a great movement perpetually in crisis! Why he did not drop down dead from exhaustion I never could understand. But he still survives!

In these two sets, the literary and the artistic, with their overlapping into what was best, I mean most intelligent, of the social set, I found all the friends I needed, and all the stimulus for work. At my exhibition I sold a few things, and picked up portrait orders. Jo Davidson lent me a couple of modelling stands and some clay, and my sitters came to the little flat where I worked facing two windows in a light that was not unsatisfactory.

Among my sitters were two very delightful women. One was Miss Laura Delano, more beautiful than any reputed beauty in Europe. Refined, cultured and serene, she exhaled an atmosphere that transformed sittings from work into relaxation. That Laura Delano existed as a fact in New York suggests to me that perhaps she is not unique in type, but a class that shrinks from publicity and remains preferably hidden. The other was Miss Spence, whose bust I was commissioned to do for her school. She was not unlike in character the famous Eton dame, Miss Evans. An astonishingly broad-minded person, direct, outspoken, severe and just. One day she asked in the course of conversation whether Dick were my only child. I explained that I had a daughter.

"Why isn't she with you?"

"Because . . ." I hesitated, "because—well, the truth is I can't afford to have her."

There was a silence; Miss Spence seemed to be revolving something in her mind. Presently she said:

"I think you ought to have her. I will undertake her education." She then offered me for Margaret a free education at a school that all the snobs paid Eton fees for! I was so touched I could not at first answer. The possibility arose tantalizingly before me. An American had already expressed the opinion that I was very wrong not to have her with me, no matter what advantages she might be getting from living with rich relations. "Children," he said, "should share their parents' standard of life whatever that standard may be." So easy to say, so hard to live up to! Rents were high in New York, and the loan of the flat was for a short time only. Even with her education taken off my hands I dared not yet include Margaret in my scheme of life. I must wait, and work, and see clearer ahead. Miss Spence's offer, however, was a beacon light.

After my exhibition at the Numismatic Society, Knoedler offered me a further exhibition in Fifth Avenue. Every afternoon an average of two hundred people came to the gallery. It was very amusing; all kinds of cranks introduced themselves to me. Some to say they were Communists and to hand me Red literature, others to tell me how they hated the Bolsheviks, or the Sinn Feiners or the Knights of Columbus! Those who did not know me made remarks about my work, while I, pretending also to be a visitor, stood among them and listened.

"How ugly they are!"

"What noble-looking men!"

"This is Russian propaganda."

"This is the most perfect anti-Bolshevik propaganda."

"I believe they look worse than she made them."

"How did she ever escape alive from such awful-looking men?"

"Trotzki looks like the devil."

"Lenin has a benevolent expression."

"Who is Mrs. Sheridan?"

"Is she pretty?"

"I bet she hates the Russians, she made them so ugly."

"Is she from Chicago?"

"That's Winston Churchill, the author of 'Inside the Cup'."

"Shane Leslie is Irish."

"He is the man who was stood up and shot."

"That is Asquith. It was owing to him that she got in and out of Russia in safety."

"That is a *mask*—I suppose it sells cheaper because its head is not all there."

"So glad a woman and not a man did this wonderful work."

"It is simply wonderful!"

"A high-school girl can do it."

"Where *is* the Exhibition?" (Question asked by a lady after looking at the busts for half an hour.)

But one got very tired after a while of hearing how brave it was to go and "weren't you frightened of Lenin when you saw him?"

The best moments I knew were those I snatched from New York and spent, in another world, it seemed, on the rocky heights above the Hudson, where George Grey Barnard had his studio. It was a spot that he aspired to convert into an American Acropolis, towards which end he hoped to induce Mr. Rockefeller to fulfil the rôle of Pericles. The result still hung in the balance. Epstein had talked to me about Barnard with great enthusiasm, and his eulogy (for I never heard Epstein say a good word in favour of any other sculptor) made a great impression. It was Epstein who showed me photographs of the Barnard Lincoln and the St.-Gaudens Lincoln, at the time of the great controversy as to which should be chosen for Westminster. I had no hesitation in my own mind as to which was the finer work of art, but someone decided on the St.-Gaudens.

Just beyond Barnard's studio, on a tableland that commands a view of the Hudson and of New York and of the sea, Barnard had built a cloister with fragments of stones from France, Italy and Spain. The labour of transporting the ponderous columns and their magnificent capitals from overseas, could have been accomplished only by one whose dreams reinforced the stoutest determination. Inside a building (can one call it a church?) of old pink brick, a colonnade of beautifully matched pairs of pillars, each two of a different pattern, harmonized into an atmosphere that savoured of all the ages. There were side-chapels and altars and madonnas and golden gates and candlesticks, and in the centre the stone effigy taken from some tomb of a Crusader. There was not a corner or a view-point that was not a poem.

It was simple and in perfect taste; built, one felt, by loving hands. One seemed to be in some exquisite remote corner in Italy. It represented, I was told, the soul of Barnard. He meant some day to be buried there. I felt myself projected into the future—a proud and grateful people would come there piously as to a shrine. In the heart of America, George Grey Barnard's body would be in Italy!

His heart was already there, but his work necessitated remaining in the greatest of modern commercial centres. No sculptor can sculpt in the desert or in a lonely place, however beautiful. The world is necessary to the development of this art. A sculptor is the most dependent of all the world's workers. Without patrons or employers he can do nothing.

Barnard had great projects. His acropolis would require all the help and encouragement that a rich nation could provide, moreover he was imbued with a civic sense that required for New York glories such as Greece. But it was also evident that for all his American pride, his soul was athirst for certain things that his mother-country lacked: for repose, mellowness of age and tradition, and so he betook himself out of sound although still within sight of New York, and with stones that had built traditions he built a little bit of old world at his gate, where his soul and some day his body, might be at rest.

IV

Small incidents sometimes prove decisive factors. If I had not lunched one day with Korbel, the Czecho-Slovak sculptor, my plans might have been different, but he happened to mention that he had an invitation to Mexico to do the bust of President Obregon, which, however, he could not accept, as he had to go back to Europe. The idea at once flashed upon my mind:

"If you are not going to do him, may I?"

"Of course," he answered.

I decided, therefore, instead of going Europewards with the annual stream, to avail me of the chance of going farther south on the American continent.

A few friends said it positively could not be done!

"A woman and a child cannot go alone to Mexico!"

But would not everyone have said the same of Soviet Russia, and had I not proved that nothing is true that people say of conditions in a country where they have not been?

Dick and I took passage in the steamship *Monterey* for Vera Cruz. To get on board a ship and go anywhere has ever enthralled me, and Dick shares this restlessness of spirit. He too loves a ship. It was June. The sea was the colour of the sky, so that you could not tell where the two met on the horizon, and so transparent that you could see the fishes deep down. There were flying fishes too, that rose up at our ship's prow and skimmed over the sea surface like little silver aeroplanes.

One night Dick stayed up as a great treat. I liked him to learn to appreciate the beautiful and I wanted him to see how night comes on the ocean. From behind a cloud-bank appeared a tiny speck of orange. It grew, in as short space as could be counted in seconds, into a big round moon.

Dick was sitting on the ship's bow with his legs dangling over and one arm tightly clinging round my neck, and he suddenly kissed me fervently, which was exactly what I too felt about it!

On June 27th (after five days) we landed at Vera Cruz in a philosophical spirit prepared for every adventure and discomfort. At the hotel a kind American ceded us his room, the only one left. Windows opened on to a balcony overlooking the square, where a great fire-tree was covered with scarlet blossom. In the background was the old Spanish Cathedral with its dome covered with buzzards.

We experienced a storm. I was wakened by the drips from the leaking ceiling; they increased until I felt ourselves to be in a dripping grotto; I was obliged finally to push my bed about the room in search of a spot where the drips did not fall. It was only a matter of time before the whole ceiling was leaking except for one small dry corner. Into this corner I pushed Dick. Then, barefooted, I paddled about the streaming floor rescuing luggage and clothes. In the end I wrapped myself in a rug on my damp bed and opened an umbrella over my head. At dawn all the buzzards awoke in the square; they shrieked and whistled shrilly. Dick awoke and got the giggles when he saw me under the umbrella, and my irritability (for I was very tired) only accentuated the absurdity.

Sleep being impossible, we got up at five o'clock. The train for Mexico City was due to leave at six-thirty.

On arrival at the station the office informed us they had already sold more tickets than they had accommodation, and they refused to sell any more. So we pushed through the barrier and boarded the train without any. It was perfectly true there was not any room; heaps of people were standing, and a fifteen-hour journey lay before us.

We settled ourselves outside, on the floor of the platform of the last coach, with our legs dangling overboard. Right and left of us sat armed guards with rifles. The train had been known to be attacked by bandits in the lonely places. We zigzagged up a mountain side rather like a local Swiss railway; we climbed to a height of 10,000 feet until we were cloud-enveloped; we went so slowly that when one of the guards who had fallen asleep dropped his rifle, he jumped off the train to pick it up and ran after us to catch us up. However, he just failed, and I wonder what happened to him.

During the first part of our climb we passed through a riot of tropical vegetation. Everything was overgrown and supersized, and even on the tree branches other plants had rooted and fell in festoons. There were, besides, a quantity of bright-coloured flowers that I never had seen before, so varied and original it seemed as if some futurist artist had been at work designing them.

We stopped at wayside stations where the villages consisted of grass huts, and the natives were so true to type that one involuntarily exclaimed, "How Mexican they look!" They wore their big sombreros and rode bucking ponies and sat in high-backed saddles. It all seemed part of a stage scene.

Finally we were so high that it was too cold to remain outside. Someone made room for me on a crowded seat, and Dick had to sit on my knees. Then evening fell and the stink of primitive oil lamps mingled with the smell of tobacco. My back ached and my head was heavy, but the backs of the seats were only shoulder-high as in an omnibus, and so one could not lean one's head. There was a Chinaman sitting on his piled-up luggage in the middle of the passage-way who would spit, a Mexican who would stare, a baby who would cry, a man who would smoke a cigar, and a woman who would close the last window. Dick was astonishingly quiet; he seemed to realize that everyone's nerves were as tense as possible. He stroked my cheek and said that he could see by my eyes that I was tired. . . .

At eight-thirty the lights of Mexico City proclaimed our journey's end, and just in time, for there comes at last a moment when courage and a lust of adventure forsake us and we become ordinary weak mortals with a desire to weep!

V

The City of Mexico! Wide avenued, full of smart motors, a band playing in a garden, and then Chapultepec Park, more beautiful and more cared for than the Bois de Boulogne! This was the place to which, I had been told in New York, a woman alone with a child should never venture. This was the primitive, tropical, disordered adventure I had dreamed!

Dick and I hired a boat on the lake of Chapultepec and wondered if we were in Regent's Park. There was this difference, however, a background of mountains, mounted police in grey and red wearing large cone-crowned sombreros, riding gaily-caparisoned ponies, and, as one rowed, one's heart did a variety of irregular movements. The slightest exertion made one breathless. Such was the effect of the high altitude.

I did not lose sight of the fact that I had come to do the bust of the President, that Korbel would not do, though how I should make my way to him I did not yet know. I trusted to luck and to chance.

One of my letters introduced me to a Mexican family, from whom I learnt something of the Mexican aristocracy's point of view. They said that decent self-respecting and prudent people kept out of politics, and tried not to meet the Presidents or the Generals. Otherwise they were sure to be persecuted by the next government for having been friends with the government that was overthrown.

General Obregon was acknowledged to be honest; but "thieves," they said, had helped him to become President and for that reason he dared not get rid of them. If he did, they would plot against him. His only way was to use them or kill them! (Was this apparent civilization perhaps only skin deep?)

Everyone seemed to live in great uncertainty.

"When your government changes," they said to me, "it is the result of a general election. When ours changes it is usually the result of a revolution!" Revolution was possible, I gathered, if the Indians were with it, and they always sided with the richest general.

"How many revolutions do you remember?" I asked.

They shrugged their shoulders.

"And what do you do when there is a revolution?"

They laughed and someone said,

"We just stay indoors as if it were raining."

The friend whom I met by chance and who proved to be all-important, was Malbran, the Argentine minister and an intimate friend of Obregon, who was reported to have three great friends; they were known as A, B and C, and were the ministers of Argentine, Brazil and Chile. He promised to take me to the President, and proved as good as his word. We drove one evening to what seemed a perfectly deserted country house. The front door of Chapultepec was wide open, no one was about. Mr. Malbran, after ringing and knocking and calling in vain, summoned a guard out of the dark garden and requested that our arrival should be announced. After waiting about ten minutes voices were heard, and the one-armed general appeared whose face the newspapers had made familiar. He invited us to go upstairs. In a formal, unlived-in room, where the chairs stood in a solemn row covered with overalls, we sat for over an hour, and Malbran had to be interpreter.

The President was a man of powerful build, his hair thick and black, his flowing moustache tinged with grey. He looked exactly what he was—a soldier.

Occasionally he twitched the stump of his arm (which was cut off above the elbow) and which gave the impression of a bird trying to fly with a broken wing. Talking through an interpreter is nearly as bad as talking to a deaf person through an ear trumpet.

I still wonder why, as he subsequently allowed Oswald Birley to paint his portrait, he refused to let me do his bust. His excuse was that as President he had not yet accomplished the things for which he represented the Mexican people, consequently he felt too modest to allow himself to be done. Now I, knowing that no man is modest, waved his assertion aside. He persisted, however:

"I cannot bear ridicule, my people will think I am competing with the Venus of Milo!" and he shook his stump.

I replied that:

"Lenin thought me extremely tiresome to want to do him, but he consented because I had come such a long way—now Mexico is farther from England than Moscow!"

"If you were less famous, Madame, and my sitting to you therefore less conspicuous, I might consent."

"Would you favour an obscure artist?"

"Madame, I have not yet allowed myself to be portrayed by a Mexican artist, what would they say if I gave the first favour to a foreigner?"

"Perhaps the real reason is that you do not wish to be modelled by the sculptor of Lenin and Trotzki?"

"That is not the case. I am far too independent to entertain such narrow ideas—you do not understand, Madame. I must first accomplish the work for which the people elected me, before I can assume any attitude that might be mistaken by them as a satisfaction with myself."

"I heard, Mr. President, that you were a man of character, but I had no idea that you had such a character!"

"Madame, I have been through many dangerous moments in my life, but never have I felt nearer defeat than at this moment, and defeat by a woman!"

I shrugged my shoulders and bowed my head. My silence seemed to confuse the President; he added conciliatingly:

"I play cards and billiards, and I ride horseback; I will be delighted to do any of these things with you if you wish."

He put his arm through mine, led me to the roof garden and picked little flowers for me. He seemed anxious lest I thought him discourteous.

"You must know in your heart that I am right," he said.

Whether Korbel would have succeeded, or why he should have told me of such a proposition I shall never know. The President disclaimed any knowledge of him. The reign of Obregon, however, is over and does not seem to have been marked by any conspicuous success. I am consoled by retrospection. The immediate effect upon me, however, was more lasting than I realized at the time. It discouraged me in art, and pushed me into another channel. I determined, as I could not do his bust, to put him to some other use. Herbert Swope had commissioned me to write some articles on Mexico for the *New York World;* the *Metropolitan Magazine* required also to be supplied.

Obregon, without being interesting, was "copy" to a certain extent, and so I applied myself to this new outlook. Sculpting after all was harder work. How much simpler to record one's impressions with a pencil. My first unpremeditated flight into newspaper work on the occasion of my Russian visit, had met with overwhelming success, why not test Winston's theory that intelligence can be put to work in any direction? As he had put his into painting as a side issue, I would try to put mine into journalism.

Thus resolved, I sought a few days later an interview, in hopes of getting something more worth while than a persistent refusal to sit for his bust! My request was granted, and Dick's name was added to the invitation. We accordingly arrived at the hour appointed, which happened to coincide with a blinding thunderstorm, following on a blinding dust storm!

The President greeted us very smilingly but without an interpreter. He led us upstairs and I understood he was expecting someone. No one came, however, and for three-quarters of an hour he kept restlessly and expectantly rushing from the room and returning with apologies. Dick plied me with questions as to the President's lost arm, and what was war? Was it a thing that we had always with us and would he go to it when he grew up?

Alvaro and Alvada, the two children of Obregon, aged two and four respectively, were then ushered into the room. Dick and the boy eyed each other solemnly, and as soon as the President had once more left the room they began to turn somersaults. Alvaro put the damask sofa cushions on the parquet floor, and when the President returned he found the children standing on their heads.

In the end Pani, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, appeared. He had come for business, but had to abandon his mission to become interpreter. We were taken downstairs and put into a car and driven across the courtyard in the pouring rain to another door. This was the "Cottage" where Obregon preferred to live. A crazy spiral stair led down to the living apartments, where we were received by Madame Obregon, a simple, young, pretty Mexican woman, grown prematurely fat. The room was small with a table in the middle, like a dentist's waiting-room. Chairs surrounded the table, and on the floor beside each chair were large brass spittoons. Dick dropped his cake into one and roared with laughter.

After a dreary tea we went away. The President had been amiable but dull, and even the best journalist in the world would have found it hard to make something out of nothing. I had failed again!

VI

There were others in Mexico besides Obregon, of lesser position but greater personality: One of these was Adolpho de la Huerta, the Minister of Finance, between whom and the President no love was lost. We became great friends and I have to smile now, since de la Huerta has proved himself a revolutionary! For it was he who led a rather considerable revolt in 1925. Subconsciously I seemed to be drawn towards him in sympathy.

Mr. Malbran was again the intermediary of this introduction. He took me to the Ministry of Finance where we were immediately received, although three rooms full of people were waiting before us. Unfortunately de la Huerta also could only speak Spanish, but he had provided a young interpreter who spoke English.

"Ask anything you like without reserve," said the Minister with great amiability. I therefore plunged.

"Why does not the government make use of all the young strong men who sit and sell bananas and mangoes in the streets, to make *roads?*"

He took my question seriously.

The economic position of the country had to be straightened out first, and until that happened all important things were held up. "If only," he said, "England would recognize us, instead of creating a wall round us—we might get on to our feet."

"Your soil is almost more full of riches," I answered, "than any other country. Why do you not exploit it yourselves instead of giving it to foreigners?" I had touched a sore point.

"Understand," he answered, "that after years of oppression, when still a nation of slaves we regained our liberty. Before we knew how to make use of it the wily foreigner stepped in to show us! We allowed him to take things into his own hands, and thus it remains. It has complicated our machinery beyond words."

Conversation had become an animated mix up of Spanish, French and English. When the Minister's interpreter hesitated in English Malbran quickly interposed in French. De la Huerta understood sufficient English to prompt his interpreter. I understood enough Spanish to get the spirit of his meaning.

He told us of his organization of a labour representation in the government as early as 1916, before the Russions began their revolution. But—things had been wrongly organized. The revolutions that occurred one after another in Mexico had not helped the masses.

"Revolution," he said, "is composed of three factors: the first is propaganda, the second is armed force, and the third is evolution. We began unfortunately with armed force, the propaganda followed, and the evolution was only partial."

He spoke with an earnestness and a keenness that even interpretation did not spoil. He said that he had devoted twenty years of his life to the cause of the labour class, but he was handicapped out of loyalty to his President and a desire not to compromise his country by going too far in the world movement. He insisted, however, several times upon the fact that there would be no real amelioration of suffering in the world until people had generally realized their duty towards their fellows—that is to say, the necessity of helping and sharing.

The next day de la Huerta called for me in a motor to drive me to El Desierto, a famous ruined Carmelite Convent on a mountain top. It was a place I had heard much of and wanted to see.

Along the road—which was bordered with wild flowers—we passed a regular procession of Indian men and women walking into the town with their loads of terra-cotta pots to sell. These were piled up high in a wooden case, the whole weight of which was carried by a strap around the forehead. Thus, barefoot and bent double, heads straining against the weight, neck muscles knotted and swollen, lips blue and bulging eyes focused on the ground, they walked for twelve or more kilometres.

"And when do you hope to better the conditions of *these* people?" I asked de la Huerta, who was as horrified by the sight as I myself.

He exclaimed "Caramba!" with a gesture of perplexity, and added:

"But even these people"—and he interrupted himself to comment on the expression of suffering on their faces—"are better off than they were before. They were nothing but slaves. The foreigners think that the reign of Diaz was a reign of peace; they do not realize that it was a reign of terror. Yes, there was prosperity because there was peace, but only a minority, a very small minority, prospered, and a propertied and leisured class sprang up at the expense of the others. Are you surprised that they rose in revolt? To-day they are still poor, I admit, but they are doing the work for their own gain, they do it of free choice; whatever they make is theirs."

Within half a mile or so of Desierto, after we had climbed and zigzagged and circled the mountain, it began suddenly to thunder, lighten and hail as it only knows how on a tropical mountain. To my great disappointment de la Huerta ordered the car to turn back immediately. He said it would be dangerous to attempt the remaining half-mile. I thought him unnecessarily fussy and alarmist, but—he knew his own country! In less than five minutes the smooth dusty road became so greasy and sticky that our car skidded in the most alarming manner crab-wise down the hill. On our right was a sheer precipice, on our left a towering bank. Behind us a Ford also slid drunkenly down the road. Brakes had no control, and it was just a matter of our skidding faster to save ourselves from being bumped. Mercifully the Ford went sideways into a ditch (and happily for them, *not* on the precipice side!) We managed to stop and put chains round our wheels. Even with chains our car also went into the ditch. When the rain slackened we got out and walked, but the road was so slippery that arm-in-arm one could hardly stand up. Afterwards I watched de la Huerta surrounded by clamouring Indians who wanted pesos for extricating the car. And then I saw that he really did love his Indians. I say "his," because he is part Indian himself, but he told me also that his grandfather was a Spaniard from Granada (therefore he probably had some Moorish blood as well) and his mother was the daughter of a Polish Jew, born in France.

VII

Dick by this time was suffering from dysentery, owing to the high altitude. I recalled in a flash all that my family had written to me of the iniquity of bringing Dick to Mexico. Therefore when an Americanized Irishman offered to show us the oilfields we started without delay and took a train for Tampico. It was August 9th.

I wonder how many lunatics have ever travelled south in Mexico in August for pleasure! The journey took two days and a night and a half. Three times the train derailed. When this happened in the night the result was, after one big jerk perfect quiet for some hours! Once in the heat of the day we stopped because the engine's piston rod broke. No sooner was that mended and we had pushed on a little way than the oil box took fire. Finally, we were more than usually delayed because a train had derailed ahead of us. Everyone got out and walked up the line to watch the work. My unprofessional eye then observed that the wooden sleepers were rotten and splitting, the bolts entirely missing from the clamps; "pins" stuck out half an inch, and it required the efforts of four men, and eventually of a hammer, to close the "points." This railway belonged to American shareholders, but the Mexican Government could not hand it back to them because they could not afford to pay for the deterioration it had suffered at their hands. Meanwhile every day that passed and every train rendered the track more dangerous.

When eventually we did go on, the line lay steadily downhill, winding round the mountains. The scenery was awesome in its beauty. At a little wayside station called Micos, a river cascaded for about half a mile into a luxuriant valley below. Dick said:

"How lovely if we could stay here!"

The Irishman who overheard him, said:

"You can come back if you wish after you have been to the oilfields. I can arrange a camp for you."

At Tampico I thought we had dropped into a film play. The hall of the hotel was filled with white suited, sombreroed men in high boots with "gun on hip"—they drank, talked loudly and smoked huge cigars. There was not a single woman.

The next morning we started off in a Ford car on a two days' trip. There was no railway, and one might almost say there were no roads to the "little boom oil town" of Zacamixtle, in the middle of the oilfields.

The first part of the trip lay through the camps and tanks of the Huasteca Company (which is Doheny's). In the vicinity of the Huasteca oil stations there were roads. Every twenty kilometres there was a camp, and at that camp there was central heating, that is to say steam coils to heat the oil and thin it so that it passed more readily through the pipe line, and gigantic pumps to urge it on its course.

There were rows of pipes varying in size, all running in the same direction. These belonged to different companies in competition with each other. For I learned there is no co-operation in "the fields." Just a wild individual scramble to make as much gold as possible in the shortest possible time.

The roads were almost impassable. We stuck in a village street above the axle and had to be pulled out by another car. A very little part of the profits earned would have sufficed to achieve a common road for the common welfare. This would have seemed only reasonable self-interest. Under the existing chaotic conditions, it required almost superhuman effort to convey the pipes, boilers, tanks, camp equipment, and all the provisions and materials necessary to the fields.

It was almost night when we arrived at Zacamixtle. For miles one could see the lighted sky illumined by the great flares ten or twelve feet high that burned day and night "for ever," emitting a great roar as the superfluous gases escaped through high standards.

In the staff house we were given a little wooden room separated from the noisy card-playing inmates and their gramophone by a thin partition. Water for washing purposes stood on the verandah in petrol tins. It interested me to see the primitive way in which these Americans consent to live, who help in the exploitation of the soil for the great oil kings of the world.

I put Dick to bed and sallied forth with my Irish guide to see the town. It looked rather Chinese. There were bamboo huts, open stores, and a couple of brightly-lit saloons—the rest darkness. We went into one saloon, took a table, and ordered drinks. It was full of half-naked half-caste women and tall, strong, clean-featured Americans, wearing blue shirts open at the throat, oil-stained breeches and revolvers in their belts. They danced fox-trots to the accompaniment of an instrument that looked like a spinet, but sounded like a xylophone.

A man came up to me who said he thought he had met me in Minneapolis, and my companion intervened with a rebuke that made the stranger apologize and retreat. At the next table a man drank his beer out of a bottle, tipped it up to the last dregs, and then turned to me with a stage wink and said "Hello!" The Irishman seemed to be suddenly transformed into a cave man; he got up threateningly and I feared there might be blows. I pointed out to him rather severely that starting a fight was not the most efficacious way of protecting a woman!

As the evening advanced everyone grew less and less sober; Chinese and Mexicans joined the throng. A harlot in crimson, who during the slack time had slept as if drugged, now took off her slipper and beat a man on the head who waked her. Another in pink sang discordantly as she sat on someone's knee displaying a hiatus of brown skin above a white cotton stocking kept up by a multi-coloured garter. All the women's white shoes were mud-covered and trodden on. By one o'clock there was not a sober creature in the room.

After this colourful night we sallied forth to visit some oil wells. A Huasteca well was being drilled. A depth of 1,700 feet had already been reached. We had hoped to witness the "coming in" of a well, but were disappointed.

From Amatlan we proceeded some miles to the great crater known as Dos Bocas, which took fire and in spite of all efforts to extinguish it, continued to burn for 50 days. The narrow neck had burnt itself into a crater the size of a lake. From the surface of the sluggish waters gas was still rising and the water bubbling and hissing in eddies. All round the crater the trees stood grey and lifeless as in the poisoned gas districts of the French battlefields.

The day we started for the Panuco oilfields was Dick's first test of endurance, and he was not six years old. About twenty kilometres east of Panuco we abandoned our car in a bog. Our luggage consisted of a gun, two kodaks, three coats and a heavy money bag, all of which we had to carry in the heat of the day, on the long trek to Panuco. (I must explain the money bag. In Mexico there was no paper money; one went to the bank and received beautiful large gold pieces. Even a small sum of money weighed heavily and was beyond the endurance of the average purse. Therefore one carried money in a bag tied round the neck with a string like the proverbial miser!) When we abandoned the chauffeur to his car, he assured us that Panuco was "just over the hill," and we started trustingly. But the shadeless plain was a bad start; we were soon overcome by thirst. The kodaks became a curse and the coats a mockery. We sweated and limped and panted, and eventually reached the merciful shade of trees, but the springs were dry. There was not a stream or a pool anywhere, and no human habitation visible. Up the hill we toiled, and down the other side and up the next. Dick complained peevishly, but he was too big to be carried, or we were too tired.

At the foot of the third hill four tracks met. The Irishman left us in a heap by the roadside, with the gun loaded and at full cock, with orders not to shoot on sight but only on provocation! He went in search of water.

When the sun was setting he hove in sight accompanied by a native boy carrying a bucket. We got up and ran stumblingly towards them.

"Shut your eyes while you drink," he advised.

Womanlike, I looked. It was opaque, muddy and full of small tadpoles and little fishes. I drank, it was tepid; I coughed up a tadpole, it was slimy; the Irishman poured the contents of his rum flask into it. I drank, Dick drank—how we drank!

But where was Panuco? Where the Corona camp?

"Fifteen minutes," said the boy.

"Come and show us the way."

He would not.

"Five pesos—ten if you will."

"No, I must milk the cows."

"The cows won't hurt for thirty minutes."

"It is getting night."

"There is a moon."

"My father is out. . . ."

Nothing would induce him. So we followed the direction he pointed out. No wonder he would not come. We picked our way for three hours, our eyes glued to the track, oblivious of the surrounding beauty, oblivious of everything but the effort of getting along. We were ferried by an Indian across the Panuco river in a dug-out, walked for what seemed hours along the opposite river bank in silent single file, through maize and cotton to our waists. Fireflies danced around and before us, and the moon rose in all her glory, making shadows among the great banana leaves.

A little more rum to urge us along, and even Dick shouted "No," when asked if we were downhearted.

We had started walking at three-thirty—it was nine-thirty when we tottered into the Corona camp and the superintendent gave up his little house to us for the night. The wife of one of the staff made some supper for us, but before the eggs were fried my head fell in my plate and I was fast asleep!

VIII

My longing for peace and the simple life, which has always filled my heart through all the most exciting and eventful episodes of my life, would suggest some primitive origin asserting itself in my veins. More probably it was the law of cause and effect, of action and reaction. Be that as it may, I was desperately in need of peace after the crowded year that began with Moscow and culminated in Mexico. It was therefore with profound joy that I retraced the journey from Tampico, ten hours back into the mountains, to Micos, where the river cascaded into the valley. The providential Irishman had organized a camp and had sent tents, stores and a Javanese cook a day ahead. We followed in a train that, having been fumigated against bubonic plague, stank unutterably, and arrived some hours late. That night we slept in a disused mud house by the railway line. The next day at dawn we were hunting for a site.

The pitching of camp was a great perplexity. On one side of the railway the bank sloped sheer down to the falls, and on the other it rose sheer to the mountains. Both sides were densely covered with virgin vegetation. There were no roads, the peasants loaded their donkeys and mules and drove them single file. On a trip of investigation we met two Indians, man and wife, who bade us "Buenos journos"; we consulted them as to the countryside and confided to them our dilemma. They pointed in the distance below to a palm-thatched roof on a verdant island in the midst of the cascading river, and in native gallant fashion said: "There is *your* house!" assuring us that we should find fresh eggs, milk, maize, sugar cane, a horse to ride and a ferry boat. Accordingly we organized our removal. The beds, mattresses, stove, suit-cases, stores, etc., were loaded on to sixteen mules. Dick rode a thin *burro* with a Mexican saddle and stirrups like tin cans; an Indian boy pulled, another pushed it.

We expected a good deal of trouble, but only one mule fell over the embankment with a bed on his back and had to be dragged up on the end of a rope by another. How they ever did the journey down the rocky foot-path through the wood into the valley below without mishap was a miracle, or how the things were ever ferried across that turbulent river in a crazy dug-out!

For thirty nights after, I fell asleep to the sound of a water roar like a great mill. For thirty days the "peace which passeth all understanding" was mine. I said to myself:

"Heaven is like this."

There were a myriad different butterflies; some seemed to have been cut out of gold tissue and sewn together with orange thread. There were others as big as a bat and luminously blue, that hovered tantalizingly out of reach like animated jewels.

Bright yellow birds swayed on the tall sugar cane, and vivid green parrots shrieked noisily in flight. White orchids grew on the mossy tree branches that overhung the river.

I have loved spring in England with its fresh dews, fragrant bluebells and butterflies the colour of primroses, but this . . . was as if one had gathered all the best in the world and composed a picture.

We lost all track of days and dates. There was no post and the rest of the world was therefore non-existant.

The idea that occurred to me was "Why not remain?" It was the kind of place I had dreamed of all my life. When I was a girl I desired to live on the edge of the desert, in the places described by Robert Hichens. Here was a place no less beautiful and as remote. There would be an end to all material anxiety. I would win back my soul, become myself, and throw off the cloak that publicity had wrapped me in, and which chafed me like a hair shirt. And Dick?

He would be happy in a state of nature! If all the countries in the world were devastated by war, this remote spot would remain untouched. So I argued to myself, and I knew thereby that I was spiritually very tired. Ever since my widowhood I had felt as if life were a kind of "walking the plank," in which I was liable to slip overboard any moment. Every day that passed and did not engulf me seemed to me a miracle. I understood why people marry. Half the time it is not from love, but from what Rupert Brooke called "heart's loneliness." It is almost easier for two rocky people to stand together than for one strong one to stand alone. I have never been sure of my strength, or the degree of its capacity. For this reason I have at times grasped here and there an outstretched hand, feeling I should totter and fall unless I did so.

The path of least resistance seemed to be a lonely road cheered by the greetings of occasional fellow-travellers, and having for support a divine belief in Providence. . . .

Had perhaps Providence led me to this quiet backwater for some express purpose? We should see. If it were meant that we should remain, remain we would, and gladly. Dick already called it "home." He carried a tame ant-eater on his naked shoulder and seemed to be rapidly becoming a wild boy cub, a kind of Mowgli of the Jungle. His body was scarred and sunburnt, most of his time was spent in and out of the river. He said he was sure that all the waters of the world joined here.

The river was the chief feature of our life. It approached the island in a state of turbulent flood, diverted into innumerable shallow transparent streams, tumbled over rapids, encircled islands, engulfed large trees and created whirlpools and eddies. There were days when it roared and raged and foamed, was uncontrollable and wild. Other days it was gentle and full of laughter as a little child. A thing of moods, untamable. A wondrous creature, fascinating, passionate, irresponsible.

There are people with the spirit of that river. They are geniuses or revolutionaries; some are mad. I hated, loved, and feared the river. I always felt it meant to keep us. Several times it tried to snatch Dick from me. He ventured fearlessly out of his depth hanging on to swiftly floating logs. Once it nearly caught me in its embrace for ever. We were trying to ford it, the Irishman and I, at its shallowest point. Arrived at mid-stream, resistance to the current proved difficult. Suddenly I lost my balance, shouted, and stretched out my hand for help. He grasped it, but could not hold me. Together we were rushed like tumbling logs down-stream.

The ensuing seconds were dark. I was conscious of being under water, and he seemed to be above me. I found myself wondering at the helplessness of a strong man. This surely was the end. I wondered how long it would take, and if it hurt. Above all I wondered if we would remain clasped together, or whether our bodies would be recovered at distances apart. And it occurred to me that it would seem funny to those in England when they learnt that I had been drowned in company with an unknown man!

After we had seemed to be turning over and round like a mere bundle of rubbish, I found myself on top and the river bank quite close. I snatched at grass, at roots, at branches—all failed—and then something held! I shouted, "I've got it!" and when we regained our feet we stood waist deep spluttering and laughing, but his laugh was half a sob and mine was nearly tears.

IX

As he was the manager of a rather important Tampico firm, the Irishman could not remain indefinitely. He was anxious, however, about leaving us alone. Particularly was he afraid of the river, and he promised to send some other members of the firm to "holiday" at the camp. The day of his departure was the occasion of my first visit to the village. The Tampico train was due at seven p.m. By arriving two hours late, he only had three hours instead of five to wait! (Such was the normal train service of Mexico!) We had no idea until we reached the village that the day of the week was Sunday. Instead of the little half-asleep place we had first seen, it was thronged with people. Everyone from the neighbouring district seemed to have come to town.

Whilst we were engaged in refilling large glasses with bright-coloured iced drinks, a cadaverous-looking man in a faded blue shirt, split shoes, and one large iron spur, came up and proffered his hand. "Shake!" he said in unmistakable accent. "It isn't often one finds Yanks around." Three finger-nails were missing off one hand; he had a distant look as if the glare and the wide spaces had tired his eyes.

"Going to Tampico? A three days' trip."

"Three days? You mean ten hours."

"Three days—on a good horse."

"By train ——"

"The train breaks down," he said contemptuously, as though anyone who had a good horse would entrust himself to a train. Further conversation was interrupted by another stranger who in a brisk matter-of-fact tone said:

"Pardon me, but is your party complete? A white man's body lies drowned a short way up the river."

The law in Mexico is that no drowned body may be removed from water until identified. We did not go to see the corpse; others went, laughing and whistling, cracking grim jokes on the way. They told us on their return that it had been in the water two weeks, fishes had eaten the face, vultures hovered on the back.

"Someone drowned!" How diverting for the village on a Sunday morning!

X

A few days after the Irishman's departure two members of the firm presented themselves on the opposite bank and shouted for the boat. As types they are worthy of mention. One was an Anglo-French-Dutchman, born in Chicago, a man with a close-cropped head who looked like a convict and was reputed an anarchist. He talked to the cook as if he were a dog, and to his equals as subordinates. These "equals" were two Texas cowboys who, goodness knows how, had attached themselves to our camp and proved extremely useful. They were proper stage cowboys, dressed in sloppy trousers, loud-checked shirts, and red neckerchiefs knotted. Within twenty-four hours of the anarchist's arrival these two were simmering with indignation and the Javanese cook was on the brink of strike.

The other new arrival was a Swede, thin and *chétif*, sent I think as a practical joke, for the poor man was utterly miserable in conditions that were alien to him. He hated the long, rough walk from the station, hated the tent, the insects, the heat, washing in the river and the absence of movies. He agreed that it was beautiful and peaceful, and restful, and all that, but he was not in search of beauty, he said, nor of peace, and not in need of rest!

One night I overheard the Texas boys discussing by the light of a lanthorn outside their tent, how the anarchist had best be dealt with. One of them with a three days' growth on his chin, the other with black wavy hair standing on end, they looked like a pair of murderous *apaches*. Said one:

"He has done some shining light boxing in his day; it were better not to take him on with fists."

Said the other:

"We will get him into the river. . . ."

I felt obliged to intervene.

"There must be no rows, no tragedies; I count on you to keep the peace."

To be "counted on" was for them rather disconcerting, but in the end they promised. I then sought out the anarchist, and told him (kindly, I thought) that his manner was too autocratic. He answered angrily that mine was too imperious. A letter sent on the next Tampico train got him recalled. The unhappy Swede went with him. A tired Canadian took his place.

Hardly had the anarchist left us than all the camp got ill. Dick got a bloodshot suppurating eye, the Canadian developed a malarial temperature of 104°, and I was confined to my bed with some mysterious nettlerash that nothing could alleviate. I suffered as if I had been scalded. A cradle of wattles protected me from the intolerable touch of the sheets. At intervals I dragged myself to the river and plunged in for temporary relief.

The Canadian, whose life seemed at one time in danger, lay gasping for air and praying for ice. Dick wore a bandage that made him one-eyed.

A doctor came twenty kilometres on mule-back. He doctored us all without any effect, stayed the night and got hopelessly drunk.

The nights meanwhile became suddenly tempestuous. The land was lit up by lightning flashes that lasted sometimes a minute at a time. The thunder was stupendous, re-echoing among the mountains and followed by death-like lulls. Then with dramatic suddenness, an earth-shaking crash, as if God in a temper had slammed His door. The river became opaque and every night it rose another foot.

After days and nights of pain and sleeplessness my mind began to work in a fantastic way. I began to think that I was not meant to leave this valley. If at first the idea had suggested itself to stay—for ever—I was now quite sure that our lives depended upon our getting away. But the river—would it let us pass? The water was rising, the current growing ever stronger and faster. In the end we must leave the island by the ferry.

Then Dick added malaria to his ailments, and I, bed-stricken, unable to get up and go, realizing that the longer we stayed the more ill we became, was filled with strange misgivings. We were in a valley of death, the island was filled with spirits and mysteries, the very stillness and enticing beauty were uncanny.

"I must, I must get away—I am going mad!" I shouted, and Dick, who heard me, came and stroked my head and whispered:

"You are not mad, Mummie, you are very sick!"

The Irishman arrived at last, all haste from Tampico, at dusk, bringing with him the unfortunate Swede who had been so glad to leave a short time before. One of the Texas boys went across to fetch them. Our ferry was a dug-out, and a wire that stretched across the river enabled one to pull oneself across. Suddenly there were screams and shouts: "They're in!" I dragged myself to the door of my tent and saw two men struggling in the water. The Irishman was saving the terrified Swede, and managed to drag him back to the mainland. The Texas boy, meanwhile, was frantically trying to hold the swamping dug-out to the wire hawser, but the current was too strong. The boat capsized, and carried him beneath it towards the rapids and then—over the falls.

By the mercy of God (for he could not swim) he was caught by the current that ran shorewards instead of by the other that foamed and rushed headlong.

Meanwhile remained the problem of the other two: they could cross without much difficulty or risk, hand over hand on the wire hawser, but the Swede stood shivering on the bank, he would not budge. The Irishman accomplished the feat and went back to fetch him. Two other men from our side went across with ropes to help him, but he preferred to return in his wet clothes all the long way to Micos in the dark to take his chance of village hospitality, and catch a train for Tampico in the morning!

XI

My fears were unwarranted; in the end the river let us pass.

I said good-bye regretfully, lingeringly, I may even say tearfully. It is a closed chapter, but a very definite one. It taught me many things. I learnt that Nature with her camouflage of beauty can be cruel and pitiless, even hostile. The virgin forest contains poison and disease. Cruelty is not decadent, as I once believed, but primitive. I learnt too to know myself.

I was sure that ultimate happiness must lie in peace and the beauty of Nature. I would work towards that end. Not here perhaps, but "somewhere," a place was reserved for me—some day I would find it.

At the end of a piteous journey, with Dick feverishly shivering in my arms, we arrived at Laredo, the frontier town, where the United States immigration authorities refused to let us pass. They declared that Dick was suffering from trachoma. "He will go blind in a short time," said the doctor brutally. For a second I thought I had been stabbed with a knife. Then I flew into a blind rage. Such a thing could not be true. God had taken one child from me. Would He blind another? I told the doctor he was a liar. It did not help us across the frontier. Indeed, the train moved on, leaving us gaping on the platform. We had so counted on reaching a good hotel and a good doctor at San Antonio. The Laredo hotels were mere primitive inns, devoid of drains or water, and crawling with ants. From our exile we beheld the United States flag flying from lofty buildings across the river—my feelings were too despairing to be recalled. We took the first train to Monterey, which was the nearest town that could boast a decent hotel. From there telegrams were despatched invoking aid. One to Herbert Swope, the other to Berney Baruch—the one sure if the other failed. In the interval of waiting, an invalid *régime* did wonders to restore Dick, we were even able to attend a bull-fight. If people are shocked by the Spanish shows, I wonder what effect the Mexican show would have had upon them. It was a bedraggled affair, neither spectacular nor well fought. Mercifully for the horses, the bulls' horns were sawn off at the tips, but even so there was enough of blood and brutality. The bulls were young ones, too young to be fierce, and they would not face the horses, so to enliven them the *bandolaria* were charged with a time fuse which exploded like a firework internally with loud detonations, after which smoke and blood emanated from the burnt black wound in the bull's back, the audience cheered, laughed, shouted and sang.

The horrible thing was that after the sixth bull had been tormented to death, one's own sensations became blunted and blood had no longer any meaning. I wondered whether perhaps men in war grew callous in this way?

My telegrams to New York met with a most happy response. The Manager of the American Smelting and Refining Works called upon me, in company with the firm's doctor. They had instructions to do everything for me that was possible, including medical aid and the offer of financial assistance! Of the latter I happily had no need, but I was touched by the thoughtfulness of a friend whose name never once was mentioned.

The Manager had orders to get us across the frontier, somehow, anyhow. If necessary in a special train with the blinds drawn down! All that had happened at the frontier was a mistake. Washington was moving in the matter, orders were being issued. . . .

Ten days later (not without some trepidation) we presented ourselves once more at the frontier, were received this time with the greatest courtesy, and allowed to pass.

XII

There was nothing whatever to do in San Antonio, but we remained there lazily, as one remains in bed for breakfast. It seemed so amazingly luxurious. Besides Dick had to be got back into normal ways before I could take him to stay with my friends. He had become a savage. He could not tolerate his trousers, and kept hitching them up irritably. On occasions he would exclaim: "Jesus!" which he had learnt from the Texas boys in camp. Nor was he sure what he might or might not eat in his fingers. To counterbalance these things, however, he had acquired a useful variety of knowledge. One of his games was to lay pipe lines. He knew the latest types of locomotive, for a Baldwin Locomotive representative in Monterey had shown him the works. Also he had a smattering of information about gods, which he knew were to be found by digging in the earth.

At the end of ten days I dared to board a train with him for San Francisco.

XIII

I did as my friends directed, and informed the guard of the famous train known as the "Lark" that we would get off at a place called Burlingame. He looked at me pityingly, as if I was just another of those poor foreign boobs who don't know anything. He answered:

"The train does not stop at Burlingame."

I said, "Perhaps not, but it will to-morrow."

Said he: "I have been on the Lark for twenty-five years, and I have never known it to stop at Burlingame."

"We'll see," said I, and my fellow passengers who overheard us, smiled.

I had, of course no notion of what or where was Burlingame, nor did I realize until that moment that Constance de Young, now Tobin by marriage, a school friend of mine whom I had not seen for fifteen years, was such an influential person.

The train did stop, and the train windows were blocked with heads, observing the strange phenomenon of Dick and me and a green parrot and much luggage being deposited in the middle of the track.

Burlingame proved to be a "chic" suburb of San Francisco, entirely absorbed by the very rich, and where they of the South who do not go to Europe spend their summers. There were, however, no big properties as in Europe, there was no village life, no peasantry. Luxury villas in small gardens lay close alongside one another, and in their midst the Country Club preserved country social life to a town standard. Here a prosperous exclusive community lived easy lives, in a kindly and almost perfect climate. They seemed to know each other intimately and all met three or four times a day. They motored to one another's houses although they could have walked the distance in a few minutes. The men (leisured American men, think of it) wore plus fours and played golf. They were, I must say, as cheerful as people in Paradise ought to be, but I sometimes wondered how they managed to have anything left to say to one another, but like children everyone talked at the same time and no one listened very much.

In their midst lived one as an hermit, rarely seen and seldom accepting invitations. He consented, however, to meet me at dinner and I forgot that night to talk to my other neighbour. The hermit was Dick Tobin, my host's brother, he has since become a U. S. Diplomatic Minister. He lent Dick and me his polo ponies to ride, and he took me for a motor trip to the coast to show me the countryside. Such an odd country! Our conversation was perpetually interrupted because so many sign posts on the road kept intruding large obvious and aggressive advice, they were not the sort of sign posts that could be ignored. "Blow your horn." "Dangerous curve ahead" accompanied by diagrams of what to expect, then, further directions as to one's throttle, there was even an announcement, "Picture ahead, Kodak as you go." In fact the individual was alleviated of all responsibility as to decisions except one: on a flat wooden fence was inscribed the reminder that Christ loved me, and I must decide, there and then, whether I preferred to sin or choose the other path. I decided to pursue my way. On the boundary of a little town called Santa Cruz, a boarding with big letters bade me farewell, hoped I had had a good time and that I should return someday! I felt I ought to stop, get out and bow, make a little speech, chalk up my appreciation on the boarding or else write a letter from the next stopping place to the Mayor.

Finally we reached a perfect Italian villa on the sea coast, amid wind tortured pine trees.

San Francisco boasts, like Rome, that it is built on seven hills. Hills they certainly were. One street had a ladder built into the side-walk to help the climber. The cable cars went slipping perilously down, or climbing terrifyingly up. The atmosphere of San Francisco is brought in ships from the East. I spent hours in the Chinese town, and felt as if I was in a corner of China colonized by the U. S. I also stood leaning against the harbour wall, watching the arrival and departure of ships through the famous Golden Gate. At night the sound of the ships' sirens seemed to be calling to me to go East and if I'd had enough money New York would not have seen me that winter! . . .

It is hard to realize that before the great earthquake the town was only seventy years old. It was founded by a mission of Franciscan Friars in 1770 and consisted chiefly of native grass huts. Then with the Gold Rush grew a rough mining town which evolved into the present great city.

My friends showed me strange things, among which the San Francisco goal. Whether this goal is different to any others in the world, I cannot tell, it is the only one I have ever seen. Therefore the impression remains.

Rows of cages contained individual prisoners. I am fascinated by crime and looked into their eyes and tried to read the passions that had impelled them, but I saw only a poor half crazed drug fiend lying in a contorted attitude on the ground. Then a good looking Spaniard whose cell walls were ornamented with pictures of American Film Stars and English peeresses. He had seduced a girl who was 18 (a minor)! Then a grey haired woman of 74 who had "smuggled drink." I begged to see someone who had really done something criminal. I dared not ask to see a murderer, but I got my wish. I was shown an apathetic woman who had shot her husband. "He was raving with moonshine," she explained, "he mixed it with some beer. Fire water it was, it drove him crazy. He threatened to shoot me, but I got the gun first and threatened to shoot him, it went off by mistake. . . ." And she did not seem to me very unusual or sinister or revolting.

What struck me was the marvellous mechanism with which all the cage doors in a long row were secured. A single lever controlled the lot and worked them in unison. It was all so efficient and so modern. I felt that those cages were just the latest thing! Just as the electric chair is the latest execution device. It struck terror into my soul. If there had ever been any hope for the prisoners of the Bastille or the Fort of Peter and Paul, or the Tower of London that they might escape somehow, no such hope could be entertained by the prisoners of the San Francisco prison. One may burrow through stone walls, or evade the sentinels, but from those iron cages with their levered bolts no prisoner can escape.

In the basement of the same building the coroner had his office. He invited me to see the "Morgue." It was arranged like a doctor's waiting room, with a big table in the centre covered with magazines, though who ever waited there, or waiting felt inclined, under the circumstances to look through "Vogue" or the "National Geographic Magazine," I cannot imagine. Against the four corners of the room hung heavy velvet curtains and these curtains hid each its alcove containing a corpse. These corpses were kept for a few days only while awaiting identification. "But we can keep them for three months down below in cold storage," said the Coroner, and led the way.

I found myself in a place that looked like an aquarium but instead of fishes behind the great glass panels, human beings beautifully set, were wrapped around in a sheet so that only their faces were visible. A little red haired boy stared at me with such frightened, wide open big blue eyes. He had been run over by a train. Two months had passed and his family had not thought of coming here to look for him. I was told that an announcement of an unidentified red haired boy had brought fifty distraught mothers, not one of whom however could claim him. The revelation that from fifty homes a child was missing was dismal indeed to dwell upon, but more unbearable still was the thought of a mother finding her child in the cold storage department of the "Morgue," and facing a pair of wistful eyes staring straight into hers through the glass panel. . . .

This, like the prison cages and the electric chair is, I conclude, the latest thing, the very last word in Morgues. The modern efficiency of the U. S. is terrifying indeed.

XIV

We left San Francisco on receipt of a telegraphic invitation from the Manager of the Goldwyn Company to meet Charlie Chaplin at dinner on the night of his return to Los Angeles from England. The whole of Hollywood were waiting to welcome Charlie, but he insisted that we should be alone with our hosts.

The moment I shook hands with him I felt the magnetism of his complex personality. He was shy and yet self-possessed, simple and yet *poseur*. He talked a great deal about his trip to England; it had been one of the big emotional reactions of his life. He had received a spontaneous public ovation that the Prince of Wales might envy. It was not mere curiosity, he said, that had animated the English crowd, he felt it was affection (as one may well suppose for all the laughter he has created for masses who have little laughter in their lives). He seemed to love the people whom he plays for, it was his contempt for the leisured classes that had reputed him a socialist by people who knew nothing of socialism. Charlie had the artist's intolerance of stupidity and narrow prejudice.

It was evident by the sadness of his smile—which his humour failed to dispel—that he had suffered deeply. He had striven and hoped and aimed. Above all—which made him the great artist that he was—he had a great capacity for suffering. He suffered in imagination as in reality, and he suffered emotionally. There were moments when real emotion swept aside the actor and all its shams. It illumined his face and controlled his voice.

When he was simple and threw off his mask he revealed a most sensitive and exquisite nature, no one had a deeper appreciation of beauty. But occasionally the paradox in him asserted itself and he would relapse into the movie actor, straining at effect, or looking at life through the windows of an advertising bureau.

Nothing corrodes the soul like advertisement, and bits of Charlie's soul were worm-eaten to dust by it—but the real Charlie predominated over the sham Charlie to such an extent that he made one forgive and forget, and retain only the impression of a lovable personality.

That night at the Goldwyn manager's he asked me if I would care to do his bust. He was curled up in an elfin attitude in a corner of a huge sofa, looking at me with a shy smile and eyes that were full of psychological curiosity.

"I'm vain!" he explained in a tone of incredible modesty, and we fixed the day and hour.

I had not meant to linger in Hollywood, but to do Charlie's bust I naturally waived my plans.

The next day he fetched me and Dick from Hollywood Hotel and took us to his studio. Dick had never seen a movie in his life, a fact which so surprised Charlie that he ordered "The Kid" to be thrown upon the screen at once. It was a marvellous moment. Dick and I the only audience, with Charlie accompanying on the organ. Dick reacted in the most dramatic way. When the Kid was torn away from Charlie to be put in an orphan asylum he simply threw himself upon my neck hysterically:

"I can't bear it! I can't look till the end," he sobbed.

Charlie was quite alarmed; he paused in his playing to reassure him.

"It is only play, Dick! It will all come right in the end!" And then in an aside to me he added, "Your boy has the temperament of a great artist."

When the lights were finally turned on, both Dick and I were shamefacedly mopping our eyes.

Charlie lived at that time on a hill-top in a sham Moorish house which he rented, and although its tortuous unsimplicity displeased him, he loved the isolation of its position and the panorama that extended for miles to the sea. At night the town was transformed into a fairy twinkling world below. To this house I came every day and stayed all day for several days. He posed, I worked, he rested, we walked, we talked, we worked again!

His moods varied with the hours and he suited his dressing-gowns to his moods. There is a feminine streak in Charlie that accounts for his sensitive understanding of situations that are usually beyond the comprehension of most men. I have always regarded colour as an expression of a mood. There are days when one feels like wearing red, other days when one is drawn to blue; there are white days and black days, and I have often wondered how men could bear to wear the same dismal-coloured clothes perpetually. Charlie was comprehensible to me. He would start the morning in a brown silk robe lined with yellow, as the day advanced and the sun glared he would change it for another brighter one. He had them of every colour and shade —orange, blue, violet and emerald. He would sit quietly for some time, and then suddenly leap off the revolving stand and seize his violin and play it walking round the room. Now and then we stopped for a cup of tea, or a tune on the piano, or to take a breath of air on the sun-bathed balcony, and Charlie in an orange gown with his towsled hair standing on end would philosophize or impersonate. Turning on the gramophone he would conduct an imaginary orchestra. It was entertaining but somewhat exhausting; he gave me too little time to do my work. I felt as if I were drawn five or six ways.

At the end of the first day's work we went for a walk round the hill-top. The air was still hot from the day's sun and full of evening insect sounds. Dick scrambled about wildly, whilst Charlie unburdened his soul of many theories. He tried to tell me what he thought was the ultimate aim of all effort. He was sure no artist would do great work until all petty ambition was obliterated.

"There must be no dreams of posterity—no desire for admiration—for these are not worth anything. You make something because it means something to you. You work because you have a superabundance of vital energy—not only you can make children, but you find you can express yourself in other ways. In the end it is all you—your work, your thought, yours the conception, and the happiness, yours alone the satisfaction. Be brave enough to face the veil that hides the world, to lift it and see and know the void it hides. Stand before that void and know that within yourself is your world."

I argued that without ambition, without the desire for success, one would have no incentive to attain. "Even if I despised the world, I should still desire that my children some day should admire me!" I said. He disagreed:

"You should want them to love you, simply—to love you in a perfectly primitive natural way. To love you because you are you—to love you whatever you may be, even if you are wrong."

"If my only aim was my own satisfaction I think I should commit suicide."

Charlie stopped in his walk and looked at me with amazement.

"How can you talk of suicide?" He made a sweeping gesture of the arms towards the horizon, "it's all so beautiful! Oh! The joy of life, the glory of the world—and it's all mine!"

When it was time to go Dick protested. I pointed out we'd stayed all day.

"I'd like to stay all night," said Dick.

"Do you like my house?" Charlie asked.

"No, I like you. I think you're the funniest man in the world!"

"I am," said Charlie.

The last day of work Charlie interested himself in his bust, which up to that moment he had, with an artist's understanding, neither praised nor criticized. It had been very hard to collect his varrying personalities and crystallize them into one interpretation. He looked at the clay through half-closed eyes and finally said:

"It might be the head of a criminal, mightn't it?" and proceeded to elaborate a theory that criminals and artists are psychologically akin . . . "both have a flame, a burning flame, of impulse, vision—a side-tracked mind and deep sense of unlawfulness."

At that moment the Comte de Limur arrived, who was in Hollywood to study moving-picture work for France. He looked at the bust and chuckled.

"I see it is Pan—one never can deceive a woman!"

Charlie said that he wished it were the portrait of someone else so that he might admire it as he pleased: "I find him so very interesting, this fellow you have made."

Suddenly an idea flashed across his brain, and like a spoilt king whose every whim must be instantly executed he shouted to his valet:

"Get ready some tents—procure some tinned foods—get out the camp beds—we'll start to-morrow morning!"

The valet seemed well used to his vagaries. He asked only:

"Shall you take the chef?"

Charlie looked at me, questioningly. I informed him I couldn't boil an egg.

"You ought to be ashamed," he said, "we'll take the chef."

We had planned to start at ten o'clock, but it was midday before we got away. His servants had in the short interval been sent in search of "a location suitable for camping." They had selected one in the mountains and another in the woods for us to choose, but Charlie would have neither. He decided for the sea coast.

"It is crowded all along," his servant reminded him.

"Nonsense, we'll find a place."

That day I learnt something about Californian roads on a Sunday! Every soul seemed to be on the road, driving a car. Every workman owned his Ford. Along the smooth winding roads they raced, they pursued, they overtook. The air was full of gas and dust, humming with machine noises. The surface oily. The only roads that had no traffic were what Americans call "dirt roads," which does not mean dirt at all in the English sense of the world, but is used to express a road that is not macadam. Now the earth roads, we discovered, led nowhere, except to farms and fields, and we lost much time in retracing our ways. The macadam roads led down to the seashore, where crowds were picnicking.

After several unsuccessful explorations the sun had lowered considerably. We were faced with a race against daylight. It was essential we should find a camping site before dark. Charlie mopped his brow and shouted, "On—on—hurry!" to the chauffeur. Would anyone have suspected it was so hard to get away from people?

We decided to pursue a sandy track that seemed to lead towards a distant clump of trees by the sea. The dust and the sounds of the main road were soon lost, dusk was falling; we must succeed this time, it was our last chance.

The road ended, like the others, with a gate and a noticeboard: "No trespassing—no camping—no hunting." Our feelings were indescribable. The sun had set. The place was exactly what we dreamed. A wood of tall, shiny, naked-stemmed eucalyptus trees, and the smell of them mingled with the smell of the sea. We sent a messenger to the proprietor begging leave to remain. He came forth in person, a burly red-faced farmer.

"Mr. Chaplin, we can refuse you nothing, the place is yours. You may do what you please. There is a duck preserve and you may shoot to your heart's content."

"Thank you. And please . . ." said Charlie, "I would like no one to know."

The farmer promised, "You shall be undisturbed."

While five tents were being pitched on the outskirts of the wood, we walked over the sand dunes to the sea. The sun had left a crimson afterglow which was reflected by the waves as they broke one on another sluggishly.

Charlie said we must bend down and look at it between our legs, because it was more impressive upside down! He was ecstatic with appreciation of the night. Dick too was inarticulate with joy. To camp has ever been his idea of perfect bliss.

Late into the night I sat with Charlie over the camp fire. A half-moon rose and little veils of mist swept like gossamer over the dunes. The shiny eucalyptus branches cast dark shadows, and their tapering leaves dripped on to the dry hard ground beneath; mingling with the rhythmic roar of the sea were the night bird cries. One by one the lanterns in the camp flickered out. Charlie sat huddled before the flames, an elemental creature, with long nervous fingers raking the embers with a stick. His voice sounded strangely deep, the voice of a much bigger man. He ruminated moodily:

"It's too much—too great—too beautiful—there are no words."

The camp fire affected him in a curious way. He revealed an almost Dostoyefskian passion for analyzing human emotions. He would extract from me in minutest detail my psychological reactions on various occasions of my life. He was not afraid to probe like a surgeon into the most hidden places. "Tell me more, I want to know—go on, go on," and in return he told me the story of his past. He told it with wonderful simplicity and with detachment, as if he were telling of someone else. I learnt about the hideous suffering of his childhood, the agony of real poverty, and the fearful thing it was to be a homeless child. I may not say more, he told it me in confidence. He did not tell it for sympathy, he was too proud for that—he told it, I know not why, it may have been the effect of a camp fire. Strange nights those were, and unforgettable days.

Charlie needed such days, he said, in which to prepare himself for a return to work.

"I must get back to work, but I don't feel like it"; he was obsessed by a fear that he could no longer be funny. His visit to London seemed to have changed him. "I don't feel funny. Think—think of it, if I never could be funny again."

But these black moods were soon dispersed, and he would roll down from the tops of high sand dunes or slide down feet first. On these occasions he was as irresponsibly gay as Dick. When the sky became coloured at sunset he would kick off his shoes and dance with his beautiful small naked feet in the sand. His imitations of Nijinsky and Pavlova were so graceful, I could not tell whether he were parodying or not. Sometimes he made impassioned speeches to imaginary crowds. He talked well and he talked sense, he hurled his imagination against the impassive sand hills. His intensity was terrific, he seemed almost at times to be consumed by it. Whatever he did, he did it intensely. He was intensely funny, but he was intensely tragic too. He put the same intensity into the tunnelling of sand bridges for Dick as into the story he invented about the wrecked ship on the beach. He shot with such intensity that when he missed a duck he nearly cried. When having wounded a duck it fell into the water close to us, he was all of a sudden reduced to a state of panic. He would not kill his wounded bird.

"I can't, I simply can't. You'll have to do it!"

I never had before, and never thought I could, but as he would not, I hit it with the oar. Charlie turned his head away and his face "registered" disgust.

After five days we were discovered. Five days was a long time in which to evade the relentless newspaper reporter. Charlie was at that moment of more than usual interest. He had scarcely been seen since his return from England. Interviews were required of him. Where was he? The news went round he had disappeared without trace. A romance or a tragedy was instantly surmised. He must be found. Here was a "story." I was a witness of its *dénouement.*

Dick and Charlie had left me in the camp, and had gone off together to find a duck for the morrow's dinner. Suddenly two strangers announced themselves, and their type was unmistakable. I tried to choke them off, but my efforts were in vain.

"Anyway, he isn't in the camp," I said aggressively. They went in search, in the direction as if by instinct from which Charlie was expected to return. I watched them walking back together. Charlie, head bowed, the picture of dejection, a criminal who had evaded the law and was caught at last. Charlie Chaplin and Clare Sheridan hidden among the California dunes? Here was a theme too good to be missed. Their five days' search had not been in vain.

Charlie looked at me in despair. "We had better go," he said.

We left the servants to pack up and jumped into the car, leaving the two reporters in possession of our cherished spot.

"It was too good to last," he said after a long silence, and then I realized Charlie's life: always hunted, never alone, never free—evading his pursuers perhaps for a few hours, or with luck for a few days. For him no peace. But he had no right to complain. Publicity was necessary to him, he had fostered it and thrived on it. Publicity is not a tap that can be turned on or off to order.

At the end of our seventy-mile drive we reached his house and he ordered tea. We sat in chairs and tried to talk. Conversation was strained. We had learnt to know one another as a man and woman must on a desert island, and yet we now faced one another as strangers. The wild-haired elfin Charlie had disappeared. A smooth-haired sophisticated young man smiled at me blandly.

"I wonder what's the matter?" I asked.

"The matter ——" he repeated, still smiling, "is that we no longer know each other." The trappings of civilization had changed us both.

The next morning Dick and I took the "sunset route" for New York. Four days and nights we speeded northwards, and the golden orange trees of California became mere memories.

XV

I now faced a winter in New York. I had no plans, but at the back of my head was the idea that I might settle in the States. Education was easy. Miss Spence's offer still held good for Margaret. Dick could go to the State School, which was far superior to our "National" school in England. This would obviate his having to be sent to a boarding-school, a custom I deplored for small boys. Moreover, my mother's family who lived in New York, the Jeromes and the Jerome Lawrences welcomed me in a way that made me feel like home. Added to which, and most important of all, work was plentiful, both sculpture orders and magazine and newspaper articles. It seemed foolish to think of going away.

I decided to send for Margaret, whom I had not seen for a year, and whose absence created a perpetual ache, as of an amputated limb. Two incidents had contributed to my decision! Charlie had very generously paid twice as much as I asked for his bust, and the American edition of my Russian diary had paid a goodly royalty. My cable requesting that Margaret should be sent to me evoked stout protests from both sides of the family.

My request happened to coincide with an unauthorized press announcement on both sides of the Atlantic, to the effect that I was going to marry Charlie Chaplin. Putting two and two together, the family jumped to the conclusion that I destined Margaret for the movies. I was promptly informed that she was not strong enough to stand a New York winter.

I refused to let myself be tortured by this information or by the doctor's letter that corroborated it. I was sure she could not have deteriorated in one year to the extent of not being able to travel.

In the end the needless expense of sending for her was forced upon me. She arrived in exuberant health but shy, already half a stranger, and I too was ill at ease and treated her at first as someone else's child who was on a visit!

I had rented a big studio with a bedroom facing Central Park, in a block known as the Gainsborough Studios. My work orders justified my doing this, although the rent was 350 dollars a month. Down town I could have found something cheaper, but the decisive factor was the necessity of being near Miss Spence's school. The children however, could not live at my studio, I must take an apartment for them. Above the studios there were three-roomed apartments and one was available. To have them in the same building with me was a great temptation and I succumbed to it. I gambled on my capacity to earn the extra 350 dollars a month—that was the rent also of the apartment. In all, therefore, the equivalent of £115 a month was required for rent alone without counting food, servant or clothes. The fact that I undertook such a burden in a spirit of optimistic confidence, proves—as I look back upon it—the high standard of living in the States. Work of whatever character was highly paid; one lost all sense of European values.

My studio was soon crowded with work, people came not to pose only, but to look. Although the visitors disturbed my work, every visitor was a possible client and therefore welcome. The art life combined with the mundane life a while obliterated the cloud that was on the horizon and that daily approached nearer. As my liabilities became more evident my cousin, Alice Lawrence, who was about my mother's age and lived three blocks away, realized to some degree the care that was oppressing me. She did the one thing that could help me most. She fed the children. Every day they (and I when I wished) were invited to lunch with her. They must be "well nourished," that was to her mind the great essential. She lived in a simple and yet luxurious manner, everything was of the best. Not only she interested herself in the children's material welfare, but she lavished on us affection of such a generous and unselfish nature that it seemed to surpass that of my real parents. This old lady, a widow, always dressed in mourning, and in character as puritanical and old-fashioned as it were possible to be, and who might, therefore, as old ladies generally do, bore children, was on the contrary beloved by them. She spoilt them, but never in a foolish way. No presents bribed their love, they loved her because she was really lovable. If ever there was a saint on earth, it was Alice Lawrence. What we should have become without her I do not know. The fact that she helped us to live is proof perhaps that Providence had us in Her care.

Once, when a payment due was delayed that I counted on for my rent, I borrowed from her, but paid her back although she protested. That monthly rent became a nightmare. Every penny of my earnings flowed into this bottomless well. It got so on my nerves that I used to wake up with a start in the night, remember the thing hanging over my head, and lie quite cold and stiff with terror. As each month was successfully paid with frightful effort, "the next" became my sole consideration. Once I was obliged to sell all my jewels. M. Cartier, whom I knew as a personal friend, indicated the channel through which this could best be done. This temporary relief more than compensated for my loss. For a short time I recovered my spirits, and could romp wholeheartedly with the children. This I never could do unless I were care-free. Whenever I was anxious I knew that I kissed them with a kind of desperation which they interpreted as my absurd sentimentalism.

Christmas approached, and Berney Baruch came to see the children. He was their other great friend beside "Auntie Alice"! There was something unexplainably appealing about this man, his giant height, his kindly face, his soft deep voice and sense of humour. They liked him, and so did I, and he liked us! All the toys the children had he gave them. On Christmas Eve he gave me some money to spend on more toys. I kept it and used it to pay my coloured maid her morning work!

In the midst of my most critical days, Mr. Colgate turned up providentially (as on a previous occasion when he commissioned me to do Miss Spence for the school), with a commission to do the bust of a director of a bank. He also suggested buying my Soviet busts to present to Colgate University; they were historically worth while, he said. My hopes were dashed however, for Colgate University refused to have the Bolsheviks even as a gift!

Then Doris Keane sent me her little girl, and came during the second sitting to judge the result! She declared it was not to her liking, talked to me as if I were a tailor who had spoilt a suit—and walked out angrily. An hour later she flung at me five hundred dollars by messenger to call the order off. I was too hard up to fling the five hundred dollars back at her. I bore the insult and kept the money.

This state of affairs, this ever-present terror of not making as much as my expenditure in a foreign country where it was perpetually necessary to smile and pretend that all was well, threw me into a state bordering on breakdown. I had fits of violent hysteria, and so that no one should hear me, I shut myself in my bathroom and stuffed the corner of a towel in my mouth. Once I invoked Wilfred and extended my hands to him appealingly.

"I can't carry on," I said, "I've tried, it's more than my strength—you shouldn't have left me like this—I can't go on, I can't, I can't."

This outburst was accompanied by passionate weeping, after which a great calm seeemed to follow, which I interpret either as exhaustion or Wilfred's spiritual intercession.

All the while nobody knew, nobody suspected. I dined out every night, stimulated by cocktails, and laughed and danced and appeared to have "a good time." One morning, I cannot remember why, or what provoked it, one of these hysterical fits seized me in my studio. My door was open, and I must have seemed demented. The memory of it is in fact as vague as if I recalled an illness. My neighbour, an Italian painter called Guarda Bassé, looked in and was much concerned. He insisted upon opening his last bottle of champagne for me, and begged to be allowed to send for a doctor. "*Mais, qu'est-ce que vous avez?*" he kept on asking, and felt my pulse, which was beating inordinately, and my forehead which denoted no fever. I continued quite limp and tearful and unable to speak for some time, and the champagne only made me worse.

One day a gentleman in white kid gloves and extremely smartly dressed called upon me. He was sent, he said, to interview me for a special article. He stayed quite a while and I found him pleasant and easy to talk to. He was in fact so exceedingly amiable and flattering that I felt I must have made an impression. Just at the end he ventured, and not unpleasantly, to ask me if I would care to pay a hundred dollars to have the interview inserted. Most people paid three hundred, but for me, an artist. . . . I was dreadfully nonplussed; no one had ever asked me to pay for an interview before; besides, a hundred dollars was much too precious to throw away. I replied that I would rather nothing at all were published. He was very amiable and said he quite understood, and that it did not matter in the least and so on. Shortly afterwards the most cruel things were printed about me, and ever after I was pursued by that paper with a venom and malice unbelievable. I conclude that the people of whom they said amiable things were people who had paid.

About this time I was engaged upon a bust of Herbert Swope. He had one of the most forceful heads I have seen in the United States. But his mode of life was Russian. He woke up late, ate at any hour, and worked all night. When he said he would come he did not, or came two hours later. Once he kept me up until 2 a.m. waiting for him, and then he came only to say that he could not come after all! Margaret, his wife, was with him, and seeing my disappointment insisted that he should remain an hour. It was then, in that still silent night, when we were all so tired, that he asked me what I was going to do with my summer. I wanted to go home, I told him.

"What for?"

"Nothing in particular!"

And I visualized how good it would be to do "nothing in particular" for some time. He thought a moment and then asked if I'd like a roving commission to write about post-War Europe. I jumped at the offer.

Adieu sculpture! My beloved art with its terrific cost of production! Adieu America, the hospitable, the helpful, the unliveable, where I had been *so* sad. Back to poor old crotchety Europe. Hail adventure!

PART EIGHT

LIFE AS A JOURNALIST

I

THE MONTH WAS JUNE, THE year 1922. Before me lay six of the most strenuous but exciting months I have ever known. My new career being one of the few that thrives in chaos, world conditions were splendidly in my favour.

First, however, I snatched a holiday at home. My family who had not seen me for so long, thought I had come back—that is to say for good. I received a welcome befitting the prodigal daughter. But when I broke to them gently the object of my return they were sadly disappointed. My father shook his head disapprovingly: "It's a pity," he said, "that you are not like other women."

My holiday at home had to be an earned holiday. I was already in receipt of salary and could not afford to remain idle even for a week. Even "home" must somehow be turned into journalistic account. I bethought me of our neighbour, Rudyard Kipling. Had not my editor said that everyone prominent in the public eye would be worth interviewing? And was not Kipling of interest to America? That he would refuse to grant me an interview if I asked for one, I had not the least doubt. Even Winston, who might have been expected to give me a helping hand in my work, forbade me to publish anything he might say. It was perhaps fortunate for him that he said nothing interesting, for in my eager enthusiasm to succeed I was quite prepared to risk his displeasure, to sacrifice in fact any old friendship that could be turned interestingly into my newspaper mill. Friendships I had learnt, since my return from Russia, to value lightly; they had proved generally of such little account. As regards the Kipling friendship, what was it worth? An occasional neighbourly exchange of visits, the cessation of which would not affect me as I no longer lived at home. Thus I argued to myself, resolved to be unscrupulous in order to satisfy my desire for efficiency. So Peter bundled me and both the children into the side-car of his motor-bicycle and we appeared as guilelessly as possible at tea-time.

The Kiplings' house is a mellow Elizabethan building in a hollow surrounded by "Puck of Pook's hills." On this lovely June day we had tea on the lawn, sheltered on one side by a clipped yew hedge, and with a big square carp pond glistening before us, to the delight of the children. Mrs. Kipling was busy with the daughter of Bonar Law who had just married an Air Minister, and after tea she took them round the garden. Rudyard who adores children, sat down on the grass near the pond to watch Dick sail a boat, who was in danger every minute of taking a header into the water-lily midst. The moment was propitious. I told him (thereby acquitting my conscience by this warning) that I was about to start off on a European tour for the *New York World.* It should have put him on his guard but he only laughed.

"Why bother? Why not stay at home and write the sort of stuff America wants to hear?" he said. Like my father, he did not understand that "touring Europe" wasn't any bother at all; it was just what I relished. Journalism was merely a way and a means. He then stumbled headlong into my net. He let himself "go" about America, and I, breathless with suppressed eagerness and excitement, stored up every word, threw in a question and a remark to stimulate him to further statements and felt in fact like the movie operator at Aldershot on the occasion of a sham fight that was meant to represent the battle of the Marne, who when a mine went off inadvertently and blew up three men, shouted excitedly as he turned the handle, "I've got them, I've got them!"

Kipling said things that were likely to have an eruptive effect upon American opinion. America who loves to hear what others think about her would hear what Kipling thought! They (the Americans) had, he said come into the War two years seven months and four days too late, and they quit the day of the Armistice without waiting to see the thing through. . . . They lent us money at eight per cent, it was a good business for them. "They've got our gold, but we have saved our souls." This and much more, with occasional interruptions when he leapt to his feet to rescue his best fishing-rod from Dick who was using it to bring the toy yacht back to port.

There was nothing very new about Kipling's opinions, plenty of people shared them, but his name lent them an import. The result was a tempest out of all proportion. English and American newspapers filled columns of recriminative comment. The French papers joined in the issue. Kipling denied the interview but that did not prevent a Cabinet Council foregathering in Washington, and Clemenceau rushing off to the States to make counter-propaganda. The first news of this reached me in Constantinople much later, when cables reached me from all kinds of newspapers asking me to reply to Kipling's repudiation. There seemed little enough to say except what Kipling himself had said about "the female of the species being more deadly than the male."

Such was my début as a journalist and the result of a holiday at home! And it cost the family our Rudyard Kipling friendship.

II

Better and more legitimate luck awaited me in Ireland. I was in time for the Irish Revolution, but before the storm burst I did a journey to Cork, being ghoulishly attracted to the charred ruins of my old home.

At the Dublin station I found Barry Egan, the deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, who informed me that Michael Collins was expected on the train. A large special coach (constructed for the only occasion upon which King Edward honoured his Irish people with a visit) was labelled "reserved." At the last minute a stalwart youth, more boy than man, hurried across the platform. He had the stride of a giant and the physique of a bull. Catching sight of Egan he beckoned him to his coach. Egan took me with him. It was the only time I ever met Michael Collins, but for my purpose it was enough. We did the four-hour journey together just at the moment when he had a journalistic value! I remembered all I had ever heard of this elusive creature who had defied all the efforts of the British forces to catch him dead or alive!

At one moment he had seemed to be a myth. Then came the truce, De Valera sent him to London to negotiate with the British Government. He betrayed the Republican cause and consented to a compromise that made him a conspicuous chief of a new state. No wonder there were Irishmen who hated him. He died of course, as Irish leaders generally die, betrayed, ambushed, out-numbered, murdered by the people he had tried to save. Irish history always repeats itself. At this time, however, he seemed to be enjoying unequalled popularity. At every station the carriage door was opened by strangers who requested the privilege of shaking his hand. These demonstrations, however, seemed to bore rather than flatter him.

He smiled grimly when he learnt the object of my journey. His people had burnt our house. "We had to," he explained, "as a reprisal—but we shall pay compensation."

This struck me as the strangest possible revolutionary tactics! To compensate the victims of revolution for their loss! And to have determined upon this point while the destructions were still so to speak, taking place. What was the logic then of destroying at all? And what a millstone weight for a new State. Suppose the Russians . . . far be it from me however, to deplore a scheme that was so essentially to our advantage. Rather should I be thankful that we belonged to a nation that was so obliging! My father would be able to take the compensation money and spend it in England, for he certainly would never rebuild in Ireland. It would be a bad job for Ireland if everyone did as we would, but that was Ireland's misfortune and her fault.

As the train rattled slowly past the verdant pasture lands, Michael Collins agreed with Barry Egan that for the welfare of the country there should be less grazing and more agriculture.

"It's easy," observed Collins, "to put your hands in your pockets and whistle a tune while the grass grows and the cattle get fat, but it's *tilling* that gives employment."

"But how can you persuade people to till who prefer to whistle?" I asked.

He chuckled: "By taxing the grazing-land of course!"

With proper zeal I then set myself to lead the conversation into an American channel. This was easy. Collins declared that the only way to treat Ulster was the way the United States treated Vermont. He then expressed appreciation for America's assistance. The United States had contributed millions of dollars to the Irish cause, and had besides subscribed a million pounds to the White Cross for the destitute.

"Without the United States we should have starved, and where hunger prevails no cause can succeed."

But since then De Valera had, he said, lowered Irish prestige, and there was nothing to be done but to "stand on our own feet as best we may, for the next few years."

Referring to the leaders of the Russian revolution, he made what seemed to me an extremely significant statement.

"They were unwise to go so far *at the beginning.* They should have had patience to attain their goal *in time.*"

Was this at the back of Free State minds? Did Collins regard the present as a step only towards an eventual Republic? Would he, if he had lived . . . ? But these are vain conjectures. I lacked the courage to pursue his indiscretion.

Suddenly he said to Barry Egan:

"How easy it should have been for the English to strangle Irish rebellion at the outset."

"What would you have done?" asked Barry Egan. Collins did not hesitate.

"Why simply have dismantled the railways, closed the banks and blockaded the ports. Ireland would have been paralysed."

It was destiny, he said, which saved the Irish people.

On our arrival in Cork there gathered round the train a great multitude who had come to meet him, and he disappeared into their midst.

All unknowingly I had chosen the anniversary of the burning of my old home as the day of my return after an absence of fifteen years. As I drove through Innishannon village, where I used to know everyone by name in every house and pub and cottage, people stared at me, hesitated and then smiled and waved. It reminded me of the scene in "Bluebird" where those who had been long dead awakened to life the moment they were remembered by the living. Innishannon was for me a dead world, and these people who smiled at me and waved seemed to be the phantoms of the past, who on the morrow would all be dead again.

At a turn in the road the motor stopped before a gate and the driver asked if it would need to be unlocked.

"It will not," I answered, "it feels more like old times to scale the wall!" And so I climbed into the garden that was full of weeds but smelling like Paradise, because of the syringa hedges that were in full bloom.

As soon as I came in sight of the house, its hollow walls standing up against the blue of the sky, I began to tremble from head to foot with a rigour of emotion. The ghost of a little girl who had once been me, seemed to be leading me by the hand and saying, "Don't you remember?" Countless incidents of the past came surging back. A climbing Gloire de Dijon rose that had survived the fire still bloomed triumphantly round Peter's bedroom window, but for all the tangle of flowers, and the sunshine of the moment, desolation reigned supreme. I tried to push through an old gate that had been thrown across the open doorway, but an uncanny wailing sound arrested by intention (as also the beating of my heart), but I discovered to my shame that the banshee was merely the swinging of the stable door!

While thus absorbed a woman came running towards me:

"Ah, Miss Clare! God bless your pretty face that hasn't changed at all! If the people had known ye were coming, sure they'd have lighted tar barrels to welcome ye!" (The *people* who had burnt our house, murdered our keeper, as well as an English neighbour, who had announced they would kill any male member of my family who dared to set foot on the estate!)

"You are full of blarney," I said, as she put her arm through mine and led me away to see another charred ruin. Five houses, she informed me, were burnt all in the same night.

"And where are their owners?" I asked.

"Ah, sure! Some are dead, and some are gone to England, and a few live on charity in the village!"

II

When I got back to Dublin there was a tense atmosphere. Idlers stood about the streets in groups as if expecting something; so much was expected that none knew where it would begin. A man in the street said to me, "Something'll sure happen soon, it's working up for a scrap!" And he really expressed public opinion. The fact is, during many weeks, while Dublin went about its business and lived its normal day, a desperately brave and foolish rebel, Rory O'Connor, with a tiny band of devoted adventurers held the famous Four Courts that stood bronze domed and magnificently colonnaded on the river front. Here they closed themselves in behind iron gates and stuffed the Law Court windows full of old law books and defied the British Empire!

It must be admitted that the British Empire left them to it, and so long as they were quiet and did not shoot or become a danger to the public, they were unmolested. So much so that one had begun to feel they might remain in this situation until the youthful desperadoes grew into grey-beards, if they did not capitulate out of sheer boredom. On the day of my return from Cork however, Rory O'Connor (what a perfect stage name for a revolutionary!) had sent forth a "general" and some men, from the Four Courts to commandeer a garage full of motor-cars, and the rebel general had naturally enough been arrested by the Free State soldiers. The comedy had taken place behind large plate-glass windows of a garage in front of which armoured cars were stationed threateningly. There was something inexpressibly absurd about these armoured cars facing plate-glass windows.

The next day (June 27th) the Republicans managed to capture a Free State "general" (Ireland at this time abounded in generals like Mexico) and they announced that they held him as a hostage against the Republican captured in the garage. Rory O'Connor it was rumoured, had sent an ultimatum (bless his heart) to the British Government. Winston made a speech in Parliament, saying that Rory must be turned out; Rory with his little band in its isolated building in the middle of a British-controlled State, must be *turned out!* One big "Bertha" would have done the trick, but although the British might do it that way, the Free Staters did not. Rory, of course, must go, but the Four Courts must if possible not be destroyed. Rory too, must be spared the inflammatory example of martyrdom. It must all be done conformably with prestige, there must be enough pressure to suggest firmness and not too much to appear a bully, for the Irish have a tricky psychology, even the Free State thinkers might turn "agin the government" if all the forces at Britain's command were hurled against Rory's handful. "Fair play," demanded Dublin.

And where was Michael Collins? Would he be forced to blow his old friend and comrade sky high? That was the question that everybody asked. Meanwhile in the English Parliament speeches continued to be made which infuriated Free State champions, who said it was their show, and they would not be dictated to by England.

I bethought me that the most interesting thing to do would be to get into the Four Courts and interview Rory, and there seemed to be not much time to lose. I went to Republican headquarters (the strange thing was that a Republican headquarters remained unmolested, the root in fact of the Irish revolutionary movement, allowed to carry on unhindered!) and flourished my *New York World* credentials. They acted as a kind of "Open Sesame." I insisted that it was enormously important that I should get into the Four Courts. Someone promptly looked up Sir John Ross in the telephone book (Sir John being the Lord Chancellor of Ireland temporarily ousted from his job by the requisitioning rebels). Sir John Ross's telephone was answered by Rory. He said he would receive me if I was at the gate within the hour. I started off immediately, handed my Republican letter of introduction through the bars, and begged not to be kept standing too long outside. Thereupon the gate was unlocked and I was politely given a chair inside. The yard was swarming with lads in ordinary clothes wearing cartridge belts. Rifles clicked and rattled and everyone joked and made merry. It seemed as if a college of boys were playing at defending a fort. These were, in fact, playboys in every sense, playboys of the Western World.

I had not long to wait. Someone fetched me and led me up a wide stone stair in the heart of the domed building. Rory O'Connor received me in a room that had a door with a glass panel. He placed a chair for me facing the door; we were, I felt, being observed. Next to him was a big revolver, and as he talked he abstractedly arranged revolver bullets into military formations.

He was typically a patriot and a fanatic, ascetic, pale-faced, with deep-sunk flaming eyes, clear-cut features and an inspired expression. He talked in a deep, slow and deliberate voice. At intervals he looked up from his regiment of bullets with a smile full of foreboding. I readily understood why a youthful crowd were prepared to follow him to death, this leader worthy of a bigger part. He made an impression upon me in those few minutes that will last my lifetime.

He was passionately sincere and convinced and broken-hearted. He claimed that the Irish had the British morally beaten at the time of the truce, and that Lloyd George could have been forced into treating with De Valera if only Michael Collins had stood firm. But the Irish cause that Ireland had fought and bled and died for, had been betrayed on the very threshold of success.

"Collins is not a leader," he said, "I know him—we have fought together—Collins is an opportunist." It was Michael Collins who lost Ireland her Republic.

"I would rather see us back in Westminster under protest, than part of the British Empire by voluntary consent. Irishmen can hold their heads high as they walk into English jails, but never as subjects of a British colony."

I asked him if he really believed he could make a successful republic of Ireland. He replied very thoughtfully:

"Yes, why not? I do not dream of an Ireland smoking with chimney stacks, I don't think industrialism brings happiness—but we can be a prosperous rural people."

We were interrupted at this juncture by a telephone call which, to judge by the one-sided conversation, must have been a newspaper reporter. Rory answered:

"No—it is not customary for us to comment on the speeches of British ministers. They may say what they like, it makes no difference. What is that you say? They are going to blow us out of here? . . . Tell them we are ready!" And he rang off.

I looked at this uncompromising Republican, determined to stick to his post as a captain to his wrecked ship.

"Surely you won't stay?" I said, "you haven't an earthly chance."

He shrugged his shoulders with a kind of fatalistic resignation.

"Then I'll go down in the ruins or in the flames," he said.

I could not for a few seconds bear to break the silence that ensued. Who knew what thoughts were surging in this man's mind? The end, the glorious, hopeless, futile and inevitable end was drawing closer. Poor, gallant, crazy Rory. If he did not succumb in the fight his days were numbered nevertheless. Consumption had ravaged his physique. The glitter of his eyes was due to some other cause besides that of Irish freedom.

As we said good-bye we looked at one another intently and our hands lingered in each other's just a second longer than is usual. He seemed about to speak but he never framed the words, and I felt I was too emotional to be a journalist. Slowly and thoughtfully I made my way back to the stone stairs and across the courtyard. A ragged crowd, as in a French revolutionary film, were gazing through the iron gate. It was unlocked to let me out and locked again quickly after me. The crowd made way for me and watched me wonderingly.

An hour later I was back at Republican headquarters, and everyone crowded round me to ask how Rory had received me and what my impression had been. De Valera was there, looking like a gigantic bird of prey. He talked a great deal and rapidly. He was absurdly preoccupied, as far as I could make out, over Document No. 2. This was the draft of a Constitution drawn up by himself and rejected by Lloyd George. He insisted that I should have a copy and compare his Constitution with that of the Free State.

The following dawn, when Dublin was awakened by a sudden cannon shot, followed by machine-gun fire, my first thought was for Rory. I hoped they would not kill him.

Everybody in the hotel appeared in the corridors in their night attires, sleepily asking for information. The night porter knew nothing. At 6 a.m. artillery fire mingled with the sound of church bells. A serene housemaid went about her morning business with a carpet sweeper, quite unconcerned. When she brought me a cup of tea I questioned her in the way people do who desire information but have little hope of getting any.

"Do you think it's the Free State troops who are firing?" I asked.

"It surely are," she answered.

"They fire very badly," I said, knowing that they ought to go tap-tap-tap instead of rr-i-p.

"Ah, they fire quickly so as not to kill so many people," she explained. I was sure she had a relation in the Free State army. Maybe she was the daughter of a Free State general.

"I wonder how many casualties there are already?" I said more to myself than to her.

"Ach, they won't be having casualties before twelve," she declared emphatically. But she was wrong. At nine o'clock I was at Doctor Oliver Gogarty's. (The "arch-mocker" as George Moore wrote of him, "the author of all the jokes that enable us to live in Dublin.") He was not up. Dublin was *blasé* about gun-firing—but I made him get up and take me in his car down to the quays. There was a good crowd and the rifle bullets came whistling close and chipping off bits of the wall next to us. A bullet whizzing too near made the crowd retreat like one man, but only to surge back again. We might have been dodging sea spray on a pier. It is extraordinary with what fatalism one can place oneself in danger; the other fellow may be hit, but oneself, impossible.

The quays were so animated that it might have been a Bank holiday. A wave of republicanism predominated. "It isn't fair," I heard on every side, "it isn't fair, there are too many against them ——" and, "Do you mind now, it's the British Government putting Collins up to this."

I accompanied Dr. Gogarty to his hospital across the Liffey. We passed behind the Four Courts as near as we dared. At a street corner we stopped and I talked to a crowd of women standing with their babies in their arms! They said:

"Do you know you are in the line of fire? A man was shot dead just where you are standing now!"

"And what about yourselves?" I asked. They laughed, and one of them said, "Ah, it's no matter, it's the will of God."

Dr. Gogarty was laughing heartily with a group of men. The joke was that the Free State generals were doing their inspection tours on Ford cars, and Gogarty's car, as such, was a target for snipers. We jumped in and drove away as fast as hell. I never felt so frightened in my life, but excited too.

At the Hamilton Hospital casualties were beginning to arrive. A little boy of about ten was brought in shot through the heart. There was only a tiny red spot where the bullet had entered.

A workman was wounded below the knee, a primitive tourniquet inadequately prevented the flow of blood. With the face of a frightened child he was confessing to a monk, and Dr. Gogarty would not interrupt the religious ceremony to attend to him. According to Catholic principles it were more important to be saved spiritually than physically.

As we were leaving a strange procession came towards us in the street. Men half-running staggered under the weight of a limp body. Women swathed in shawls followed wailing. I seemed to have seen something of the kind on a Greek bas-relief, or maybe it was some well-known painting of the descent from the Cross. The women's wailing had the cadence of music.

"Ah, the poor man, the poor man! There was no better man. The poor old man!" Their words faded into a weird "keening," and they moaned over a blood-drenched sheet and cursed the name of Rory O'Connor.

Before the day was far advanced, Republican snipers were all over the town, chiefly in upper windows and on roof-tops. Shops closed and ambushes became a nightmare. People went about their business with their lives in their hands. It became an adventure even to step outside the door. A uniform was sure to attract a bullet, and usually it was the passing civilian rather than the soldier who got hit. People avoided a uniform as they would the plague. An armoured car was an objective for a bomb, and on sight of one people flung themselves down flat as a precaution.

A brother newspaper correspondent on the *Freeman's Journal*, who knew I had interviewed Rory the day before, assured me it was now spot news and worth cabling. No other correspondent had thought of getting into the Four Courts. I appeared rather sceptical however, for the fact was I never had done any journalistic cabling and had not the remotest idea how to set about it. My friend, however, insisted, took me to the *Freeman's* office and ensconced me in an empty room with pen, ink and telegraph forms. He showed me how to abbreviate sentences, and initiated me into the usage of "stop," and "quote" and "unquote," etc. In fact my first lesson in practical journalism was to the accompaniment of cannon and machine gun fire.

Left alone it took me two hours to frame that cable, but it resulted in a congratulatory reply from my editor and a bonus of a thousand dollars in addition to my salary.

Meanwhile, after twenty-four hours, the Four Courts were still being bombarded. There appeared by this time no chance of saving the building. It was already battered and pierced with cavernous rents. No doubt a serious and determined effort would have finished it in half an hour, but Collins dared not give too stringent orders or his men might refuse to obey. The firing of a sixty-pounder loaded with shrapnel made the greatest noise with the least amount of damage. The London newspapers wrote with such approval of the stern measures that were at last being taken that they nearly wrecked the provisional government. It was all very well to have made a truce with the English, and to have established the Free State, but the English were as much the enemies of the Free State as the Irish Republicans. Any suggestion that the English were dictating to the Free State was fiercely resented by the Irish of all parties. Strangely enough, the citizens of Dublin remained extraordinarily good humoured. On the crowded quays no one took violent sides. Free Stater and Republican, standing shoulder to shoulder, watched the bombardment across the Liffey and argued good naturedly.

In the afternoon I joined two press photographers on their rambles through the town. They were looking for "copy." The streets were deserted as if the city were dead, and overhead the firing proceeded uninterruptedly. The knowledge that a bullet might hiss out from anywhere, either right or left, in front, behind or overhead, was exceedingly unnerving. I was so frightened that I put my hands in my coat pockets and whistled as if I didn't care a bit—it was the only way to disguise my nervousness, and as a matter of fact, the pretence of courage dispelled a little of my fear. But if ever I should chance in another crisis, to see a man with his hands in his pockets, whistling, I shall assume him to be as frightened as I was that day in Dublin. The chief cause of one's fear was the uncertainty concerning anyone who passed in the street. Republicans in plain clothes played the part of soldiers and terrorized the town. At the

Shelbourne Hotel, for instance, two plain-clothes men stood at the top of the steps, arms folded and revolvers sticking out from under their left elbows.

"Who—and why ——?" I asked the office clerk. He shook his head. "I'm sure I don't know who they are, nor why they're there, or which side they belong to; they say they're on duty."

On June 30th the Four Courts surrendered and proceeded to burn. A great explosion filled the sky with documents, and Winston Churchill philosophically declared that, "A State without archives is better than archives without a State!"

Rory O'Connor did not "go down in the ruins or in the flames." He was taken prisoner and shot in cold blood six months later as a reprisal.

That evening I left Dublin. The ship was crowded with refugees, and as we steamed out of harbour the columns of smoke rising from the burning Four Courts smudged the stormy sunset sky. The drama was over, the playboys had played their part.

III

After Ireland I went up the Rhine with Peter in his motor as far as Wiesbaden, to observe the phenomenon of French occupation. From there by train to Berlin at a moment when the mark was sinking rapidly. Thence by aeroplane to Danzig, because it seemed as if Poles and Germans were preparing for a scrap. Then, just as I was deciding to set out for Budapest and Vienna, Lord D'Abernon, whose opinion I valued, advised me to go instead to Geneva: "At the League of Nations you will find all the statesmen of Europe whom you want to meet, and you will learn more about the European situation than if you travelled for months in their individual countries."

So I started for Geneva, the cold, unemotional and appropriate *habitat* of the League. The Geneva Lake may be blue, but it does not reflect the Heaven of an Italian lake. The mountains may be marvellous, but they do not thrill one inwardly as other mountains do. Geneva left me cold, like the League.

Some of the best brains of Europe were gathered together. The hotel lounges resembled parliamentary lobbies. The statesmen took themselves seriously, as statesmen do when there are no women present to bring them down from their heights and make them human. Diplomatists were pompous as they ever are, devoid of humour and playing for effect. Each and all were accompanied by quantities of well-trained, alert, self-conscious, deferential secretaries, who do so much to create around their chiefs an atmosphere of mystery and importance. Here were the representatives of forty-two nationalities, all moulded into the same type.

The third assembly took place in the Concert Hall of the Victoria Hotel, which looked like the interior of a Swiss chalet glorified. Paderewski, drumming with his fingers on the pitch pine balustrade, looked down from the gallery. The Biship of London and Mrs. Philip Snowden were also onlookers.

The Council meetings were more interesting, because the most conspicuous personalities were concentrated together away from the herd. These meetings took place at another hotel, rechristened the "Secretariat." Here were gathered together round a table Lord Balfour, enigmatic and detached, who, when he was not counting the flies on the ceiling, covered his face with his hands that none might read his thoughts. M. Hanotaux, the impersonation of French reactionism, who nodded or shook his head assertively as the speeches affected him. On the occasion of the Danzig question, when the German delegate made his statement, M. Hanotaux closed his eyes and adopted a look of nausea at the mere sound of the German language. M. Hymans, of Belgium, was then the only member who betrayed a sense of humour. Next to him Viscount Ischi of Japan, impassive, mysterious, sinister. Then Marquis Imperiali, with an eyeglass and a blank expression. Lord Robert Cecil, the League's greatest enthusiast, long-limbed, long-spined, long-fingered, sat all crumpled up, until he spoke, and then delivered his speeches as if they were sermons.

I was as anxious as possible to take it all very seriously, for Lord D'Abernon believed in it, and he was a man who did not believe in many things: but when a Syrian Arab pointed out to me that while Geneva was engaged in peace councils, world interest was shifting to the battlefields of the East, I took his advice and secured the first available place on the Orient express for Constantinople. The Greek army was in full flight and the Turks were flushed with victory. It was impossible to foresee what new changes might not take place on the map of Europe.

IV

For nearly three months I had been obliged to study European conditions and politics, and so I was more or less prepared for the Constantinople imbroglio. "Inter-allied control" it was called, and from what I saw of it, the Turks were justified for all their hatred of the foreigner.

The control of a foreign city by even one alien power is usually a grim fiasco, but the control of Constantinople by three cannot be imagined by anyone who did not see it. It finished European prestige for the Turk. The mismanagement, the injustice, the brutality, the endless insult and humiliation to which the Turks were subjected, is a dark blot on international history. I found myself in the midst of this and obliged to write about it. If I criticised the others, I was equally obliged to criticise my own.

I seemed to have arrived at a psychological moment. Constantinople was hung with Turkish flags in celebration of their sweeping victory over the Greeks. Everywhere one saw pictures of Mustapha Kemal, the one man who from overwhelming defeat and humiliation had led the Turks to victory.

They felt they could at last lift up their heads in spite of the uniformed officials of three foreign nations who thronged their streets; they could be tolerant a little longer, because the end was drawing near. Already the "inter-allied" forces were divided among themselves. The British seemed to be on the brink of war with Turkey, whilst the French, busily equipping the Turks, declared with the Italians that they would take no part in the event of hostilities. The air was full of wild rumours. Every day, every hour grew more tense. Would the triumphant Kemal stop short in Anatolia or would he defy the British and pursue their protégé across the Marmora into Thrace?

The Greek and Armenian populations of Constantinople were convinced that Kemal was about to march into the town, and they were in a panic of apprehension. The ragged remnants of Wrangel's Russian army also were in dismay lest the entry of Kemal bring in the allied Bolsheviks. Meanwhile the Sultan, who had bound himself body and soul to the British for protection, and who the year before was guilty of having condemned Mustapha Kemal to death, lamented the Turkish victories and prayed to Allah to protect him from the Kemalists!

As for the journalists, they were wringing their hands and tearing their hair. They were up against inter-allied as well as Turkish censorship. By the time the British, the French, the Italians and the Turks had deleted everything that might be derogatory to themselves or their policies, there was little left. Hamid Bey, the representative of Angora, who had his office in the headquarters of the Red Crescent at Stamboul, seemed to be the only source of reliable information. He received me always graciously, and kept me constantly informed. He said the Turkish army meant to pass the straits. The Greek army had been allowed to pass, and the Turks could claim equal neutral rights. General Harington had told him that if the Turks attempted to pass he had orders to fire. Each believed the other was bluffing.

It is not necessary to rake up these details, they are plentifully recorded and have passed into history. I had but one ambition and that was to see Mustapha Kemal. To this end I consulted Hamid Bey, and he advised me to forget my British passport, gave me instead a Turkish identification paper and indicated a boat that was leaving for Smyrna.

The boat on which I took passage belonged to the Messageries Maritimes and was bound for Beirut with French officers. It only stopped at Smyrna in order to disembark a delegation of the Red Crescent. The Turkish officials who came on board examined the paper Hamid Bey had given me, and which, being inscribed in Turkish, I could not read, and they passed it round from one to another and then rose to their feet, bowed and shook me by the hand. They proceeded to inform me that the town was in a most unsettled state (one could see the hollow shell-like house fronts along the water's edge and smoke still rising from the ruins). Bandits were in hiding, refugees were camped all along the water-front, the only hotel was in the Turkish quarter and was no safe place for a woman alone. They seemed anxious to help, but unfortunately helpless. Something had to be decided, and quickly, for the steamer was almost immediately going to continue on its way. I had no wish to be carried on to Beirut. There I stood upon the deck with my suitcase and a petrol tin full of clay (for I was determined to reach Mustapha Kemal only as a journalist if the sculptor failed), but no one would let me go ashore. An American newspaper correspondent, who was accompanying the French, then took pity on me. "It is not much I can do," he said, "but there's just time." He ordered a boat and took me and my suitcase and my clay bin alongside a United States destroyer and introduced me to the Commodore. "I leave her in your hands, Commodore," he said, "she isn't an American subject but she's an American correspondent. Good-bye!" And he returned hastily to the steamer that was already weighing anchor.

The bluejackets stood looking first at me and then at the Commodore with faces like masks, and the Commodore, with all the seriousness of a young man who has responsibility, looked at me severely. The rowboat had gone away and left me; he could hardly throw me overboard.

"You can stay until we find a place for you on shore," he said.

I stayed five days!

One of the lieutenants gave me his cabin. I was treated as the ship's mascot and nobody complained of my presence. On the contrary, I fell into the ship's ways and regulations with an ease that suggested I had been accustomed to discipline all my life! I took root and wished those days might become a lifetime. The officers vowed it was excellent for the ship's *morale* to have a woman on board. They were nice! I shall never forget them and the hundred little ways in which they attended to my comfort. No race in the world can beat the American for chivalry. There was no British ship in the harbour, happily, for the British would surely not have taken me on board, and if not the British then why the Americans? As it was, they felt there was no alternative. The British were conspicuous by their absence. French, Italian and American flags were stuck up everywhere, Greeks and Armenians huddled beneath their imagined protection. The British flag was nowhere to be seen.

I felt so unhappy that my people should have been the supporters of those most absurd Greeks. The only people who appeared to be in the least respected were the Americans, because they were so determinedly neutral. In their neutrality they were able to be of more use than any friend or ally. Each side—Turk as well as Greek—trusted them, and whatever favours they asked were invariably granted.

The day following my arrival I went ashore with one of the lieutenants from the destroyer (the Commodore would not let me go alone), who commandeered a Ford car that stood before the United States Consulate and drove me to the villa outside the town where Mustapha Kemal had his temporary headquarters. It stood at the top of a terraced garden overlooking the bay. I came by appointment, and as I followed an aide-de-camp up a thousand steps in between shady trees and cascading stream I was conscious of a party of people watching me from above. Somewhat hot and out of breath, I reached the summit. There was an intimidating silence as I followed my conductor across the crowded terrace and into the house. The Ghazi at my approach had evidently left his party in order to receive me in the salon. His sphinx-like expression and unsmiling ultra-politeness were to me quite unfathomable. I was disconcerted by the fact that having placed me on a sofa he sat on the other side of the room near an open window so that the people on the terrace could overhear us. The distance between us was chilly, and he spoke French correctly but with difficulty.

He was dressed in so simple a uniform that one would not have guessed he was a Marshal, and his fair hair and blue eyes were very unoriental. He fingered a *tespi* of red coral which gave me the feeling that I was disturbing a man who was trying to say his prayers!

He told me that the day before he had given a two-hour interview to an American press representative, and that it was therefore useless to reiterate the political situation. My rival, who had taken the wind so completely out of my sails, was John Clayton, of the *Chicago Tribune;* he had given me assistance on several occasions. I liked him, but for *this* I meant some day to be even with him.

Kemal avowed a desire for peace. He said he knew that the English people were not against him, but only the English Government, "and I am acting with such patience —in order to give them every chance of retiring with dignity from the attitude they have adopted." And with grave assurance, he added: "The sympathy of the entire world is with us at this moment."

He hoped to be shortly in Constantinople, but he wanted if possible to get there by peaceful means in order to avoid a similar tragedy to that of the burning of Symrna.

We discussed the relative importance of the Armenians as Turkish subjects. He said all the things about them that everybody knows. For instance, that they were the victims of foreign political intrigue, that in the Great War they helped Imperial Russia against Turkey. Always they had been inimical in spite of the fact that they enjoyed equal rights of citizenship, had parliamentary representation, and were excused military service. He thought that if they had been left alone and not been incited by outside influence, they might have become assimilated into the Turkish nation. In any case he said emphatically: "Our feeling against them has nothing to do with religion."

A servant then appeared bearing a silver tray on which were beautiful old tankards of water and two dishes of jam. There were spoons but no plates. I was quite at a loss to know what to do. He smiled for the first time, seeing my embarrassment and explained this Turkish custom. One dipped the spoon into the jam pot and ate one *cuillerée* and then washed it down with water. He set the example and then rather nervously (very nervously for such a self-possessed man) said he would like to send for the "lady of the house." I had no interest whatever in meeting the lady of the house, and managed to delay his purpose by producing a little collection of photographs of my work, and asking him if he would let me do his bust. He seemed quite interested and stared long at Lenin. He then said that although he was not a Communist he saw in Communism a great many fine ideas: "But in the Turkish psychology Bolshevism can have no root, for the Turks are not industrialists, and the peasants own their land; also there are no large properties or vaunted wealth, none of the provocative inequalities in fact, that are so evident in other nations."

"Will you do me the honour?" I asked. He answered that he would be "proud and delighted."

"May I begin to-morrow?" I begged excitedly. He hesitated.

"I have very little time. . . ."

"But still," I urged, "even Julius Cæsar managed to find the time, and Alexander the Great, and Napoleon!"

At this juncture we were interrupted by the "lady of the house," a short, thick-set, round-faced, big-eyed woman, young and yet with the poise of middle age. She sat down and looked at me with such insolent contempt that further conversation, whether journalistic or artistic, was paralysed. Kemal said something to her in Turkish and tried to show her the photographs of my work, but she would not look at them, emitted a scornful chuckle and crossed her arms as if to say, "I wonder how much longer she will remain."

I did not know that the lady in question was Kemal's bride-to-be, not that this fact could justify or explain her extreme discourtesy. I got up to go, but I made a last effort to secure the Ghazi's head!

"If you would let me . . . I will wait in Smyrna until you can spare the time. . . ."

He looked rather hopelessly round the room and said: "*Madame, je ne suis pas chez-moi,*" as if with the encouragement of the "lady of the house," he might have consented. She remained however, disdainfully silent and he added conciliatingly:

"I will sit to you in Constantinople."

"But that's a long way off!" I exclaimed.

"Perhaps not *so long*," he replied enigmatically.

And his blue eyes had a hard determination. Latifé Hanum (for it was she) had captured this adamantine Trotzki, so well worth capturing! That she did not succeed in keeping him, that she lost him in the end, or rather, was publicly flung away by him, was the price she paid.

She certainly was unworthy of the trophy. A woman of education and culture who represented the advance guard of Turkish emancipation, she had a great chance of playing a great part. Her arrogance and jealousy alienated everyone with whom she came in contact. At the end of three years, when the star of her fortunes set with the rapidity of a comet, not an expression of sympathy was evoked by her plight.

V

After seeing Mustapha Kemal there was really no reason for remaining in Smyrna, but I had to await a means of getting away, and for some days the only ships that came into the harbour were those (in an average of eleven a day) for removing the panic-stricken refugees.

The officers of the destroyer co-operated with the Turkish officials to accomplish this purpose, but the Americans were few and the refugees were an unending mass. With more resources a good deal could have been done to alleviate the appalling chaos, but without that handful of Americans who worked so indefatigably, conditions would have been unimaginably worse. The panic was caused because a date was fixed by the Turkish authorities for the evacuation; anyone remaining over that date expected massacre. Consequently, they could not get away fast enough, and as the townspeople were embarked, more refugees kept pouring in from the interior. Although the first day we embarked 40,000 into eleven ships between sunrise and sunset, the crowd that remained was just as great as before.

I had taken the opportunity when talking with Mustapha Kemal, to explain to him the confusion that was created by this time limit, and of the possibilty of the evacuation not being completed within the time, and he assured me that the date was of no consequence and would be prolonged if necessary. This news we spread as far as possible, but it was not easy to convince hysterical maniacs, especially as we did not speak their language.

The horror of the first day was for me an initiation. During the first hour I suffered acutely from my impotence to help, and it was then that I was witness of a drama that made me shock-proof: I was standing between an American officer and a Turkish guard, it was a fairly quiet moment, the refugees were waiting for the gates to be opened to admit them on to the embarkation pier. Next to me was a Greek who for some reason or other had just been arrested by the Turkish guard. I noticed that he was looking very intently and fumbling with his throat. The fixed look in his eyes was so strange that I wondered for a moment whether he was trying to give himself a morphia injection, though whether it was customary to do so in the throat it did not occur to me to question, at the moment. After a few seconds of looking thus into each other's eyes, I realized that he didn't even see me, so intent was he upon his purpose. I seized an American who was near me by the arm, and in a voice vibrant with horror I cried:

"There's a man cutting his throat!"

The American told me very severely to pull myself together. From his tone I realized that I was in danger of making a fool of myself. He then said something to the Turkish guard, who looked at his prisoner with complete indifference, and made no attempt to stop him. There were thousands of spectators to this scene, all the refugees who were held back by soldiers with fixed bayonets, for fear they should rush the gate. A mad woman walked back and forth gibbering loudly. The Greek meanwhile had inserted a penknife into his throat in an effort to cut his jugular vein, but he merely cut his vocal cords, bled horribly and emitted guttural sounds like an animal. I covered my face with my hands and hoped it would be over quickly, but an unaccountable knocking sound forced me to turn and look. Having failed to die by cutting his throat the man was trying to dash his brains out against a large stone on the ground. This also failed, and mad with desperation, and determined to die, he jumped over the quay into the filthy water that was stinking with rotten corpses of men and beasts. An unmerciful Providence would not permit him to sink. His poor body floated on the surface. By sheer force of will he kept his face under, insisting upon drowning. I was amazed at the length of time it took. Every moment the red circle around him grew larger, and still he moved, like a wounded bird. The Turks, so prodigal of their bullets, never had the mercy to help him to his death. They just watched, and waited, and finally when he had ceased to move, one of them waded out and removed his coat from him and searched his pockets. The corpse was then hauled up on to the quayside and dragged face downwards through the dust and flung on one side like a heavy sack. Later he was thrown across the floor of a carriage and driven away with his feet in absurd button boots hanging limply over the edge.

The fact that he was not left in the water to decompose with the other corpses, but was driven away in a carriage, suggests that he must have been a prisoner of some importance. I wonder what the circumstances were that made him so anxious to take his own life. The incident is not worth recording for its own sake, it was only one among many, to which after a few hours, one grew accustomed, but it was the first of all the horrors that I saw, and it gave me furiously to think. I had always imagined it must be so easy to die, that death in fact was always lurking in readiness to spring, that it was like a wild animal, against which one had to guard, and the difficulty therefore, the slowness with which this man died in spite of all his efforts, was a great surprise to me.

The Mussulmans believe that "what is written is written." A man, therefore, who takes his life is opposing that which is written. He is creating the end before it is meant to be. This man's hour had not come as planned by destiny, hence his difficulty. At least that is how I explain the phenomenon to myself. Others may argue that according to the destiny theory the man was destined to suicide, but I regard suicide as a violent act of revolt against that which is written in one's fate.

Every day I assisted at the terrible spectacle of the refugees forcing their way through the half-open gate on to the quay. The idea was to open only one half in order to control the flood, but those for whom the stream did not go fast enough tried to climb the spiked fence. They would drop their children and their baggage over and fail to get over themselves, or be beaten back by the Turkish guard. Families got separated and wept hysterically. Confusion and chaos reigned supreme. The men of military age were not allowed to depart, they were kept for no one knew what purpose, but it was rumoured they were intended to rebuild the areas that had been laid waste by the Greek army. In other words, it was probable that their families never would see them again. Sons were torn from their mothers, and husbands from wives and children. Some attempted to appear old and bent, or so ill as to necessitate having to be carried. Some tried to pass the barrier disguised as women. The Turks kept a sharp look-out and no one escaped. Those who attempted to evade were roughly hauled back, or pursued and cracked on the head with the butt of a rifle.

The most merciless sun beat down upon this struggling mass of humanity. Those who had fought their way through, having been whipped and trampled on and systematically robbed at each barrier, arrived at the gangway in a state of collapse. The women were crying or fainting, some of them had lost their reason; it was necessary to take their babies from them and help them on board. I handled babies until my arms ached, dirty, half-dead babies covered with scurvy, sucking at their mothers' empty breasts. There were cases of childbirth on the quay. Those who managed to be attended by the ship's doctor or to be carried on board on a stretcher in time were the lucky ones. One woman gave birth literally as she was being impelled along by the crowd rushing the gates. There was no chance of stopping or turning aside. She came through the gate, bent double over the new-born infant still attached.

A young boy dreadfully overburdened with the family's belongings stumbled on the gangway and fell between the ship's side and the quay and was drowned before he could be recovered. A frenzied woman beat her breasts and screamed—it was her son—but there was no time for sympathy, others came crowding on, she was lost in their midst.

There were dead and dying everywhere. When the pier-gates were closed after the departure of a ship, people who seemed to be asleep were really corpses. An old man sat in a chair with his hands leaning upon the stick between his knees, in the attitude of Whistler's picture of Carlyle. A cloth had been flung over his head, and the corners fluttered gaily in the wind. His kith and kin had sailed away and left him sitting there. What could they do with the dead man? Before the gate was opened for the next rush, someone pitched him over the side into the water.

Those who got away on the overcrowded ships were hungry and parched, even dying of thirst. Children were wilting like flowers. Some of them could not swallow because their lips and tongues were blistered. It was not that water was scarce but there was no way of organizing the supply. If an attempt were made to give a glass of water to one dying, a hundred beseeching hands, young and old, were outstretched. To such a crowd a bucketful was a mere drop, and the bucket would as often as not be spilt by those who frantically snatched at it before it could reach those who most needed it. The suffering was infinitely too great to cope with. One tried one's best to reassure the crowd, but they would only weep and clutch our arms and kiss our hands; women clung round the officers' knees beseeching to be allowed to board the next ship, and offering all the money they had for a ticket. In vain one assured them that they did not need any tickets, and that the next ship would not be the last. They were mad with fear and would not understand. Even some of the Turkish soldiers were moved to pity. One Turk told me it "made his heart ache" to see them. The Turkish soldiers were naturally callous of human life as men are who have had fourteen years of war, but although they did murderous things one moment they were tender the next. I saw a Turk who had stoned a man to death in the water, throw himself upon a fallen child and protect it with his body from being trampled at the gate. They were not, on the whole, as cruel as they might have been. They had crossed a country laid waste by the Greeks, where Turkish villages had been burnt and Turkish women and children massacred. The stories each told of the other made it difficult to take any part, but I saw Turkish soldiers exercise restraint and sometimes pity, and once when a Turkish officer caught a soldier robbing the refugees he beat him over the head in sight of all the mob until his cane broke, and then used another.

After the third day had passed in this way, a British cruiser steamed into the harbour. She was the flagship of Admiral Nicholson. The Commodore, my host, signalled to him that I was on board; a reply signal invited me to lunch. The Admiral, whom I had never seen before, started off by telling me that I had no right to be where I was, that I ought not to be in Smyrna at all, that my job wasn't a woman's job and that . . . well, frankly, I was a nuisance! It was so British of him. I answered that I desired nothing of him, and that the Americans upon whom I had planted myself had never told me or made me feel in any way that I was "a nuisance." Having thus cleared the air we sat down to a pleasant luncheon!

The arrival of the British ship was a great godsend, for all the officers and men turned up to help our meagre forces with the embarkation business. It was curious to observe these men who were new to the work, and its effect upon them. They were rather shocked by the Americans and thought their methods rough. The Americans were not really rough, but only hardened as the British would have been also if they had been at it for three days. I never saw anything more moving than the tenderness of the British bluejacket towards the weak and suffering, the way they handled the women and children and encouraged them, patted them on the back, put their arms around them, carried the sick and emptied their water barrels to the last dreg.

One night as I left the embarkation pier by boat to return on board the destroyer, I watched the Turkish searchlight play upon swimmers of military age who were trying to escape to the refugee ship. The Turks on the pier standing among the white uniformed British and American naval officers were firing on the swimmers. At first they were rather wide of the mark, but as they gradually began to get the range each shot made a splash that grew nearer and nearer to the swimmer. This horrible drama was finally put an end to by my Commodore who offered to send out a launch to pick up the swimmers on condition that he should be allowed to return them to the quay whence they started, as, being a neutral, he could not hand them over to the Turks. His offer with its conditions was accepted.

Such was the grim and gruesome result of Versailles statesmanship. It was easy for those people seated in their comfortable conference chamber to decide with a pencil and a map that Smyrna should be handed over to Greece. In that decision were involved thousands of women and children whose fate was tragic beyond conception.

This particular aspect of post-war Europe I cabled in stirring language to my paper. I believe it raised quite a lot of money for refugee relief. At all events I received another thousand dollars for myself, and a cable by return telling me that I was a born journalist.

VI

When I got back to my destroyer on the fifth day, the Commodore suggested that if I wished to leave Smyrna I could do so in the U. S. destroyer *L*—— that was leaving at ten p.m. for Piraeus. It seemed the only thing to do. No passenger steamers called at Smyrna, and although I had no need to go to Greece I accepted the offer. Needless to say how sad I was to go. The appalling realities of those days had cemented us into a kind of camaraderie. I felt a real affection for the ship's company, whose courtesy and kindness could never be adequately acknowledged.

How that destroyer pierced through the night! The sensation was quite different from that of an ordinary steamer. The reverberations of the engines were not the same, and there was a sense of speed. The next morning we glided into Piraeus. A launch conveyed me and my luggage to the landing steps where I called a taxi. Having arrived in a warship there were no formalities of customs or passports. Would that entry into foreign countries were always as simple!

My first enquiry was for a ship to Constantinople. Having satisfied myself on that score, I passed through the modern Greek capital with my mental eyes tight shut and opened them only when I reached the Acropolis. It was a hot day and out of season (the 1st of October) and therefore there were no tourists. I had it very nearly to myself, and gave full rein to my overwhelming sense of having been there before. I had always known that I had lived in Greece. Even A. P. Sinnett, my old friend of the Theosophical Society, had corroborated for me this belief. He claimed to have found out that I had once been a woman sculptor, and that by my craft I earned sufficient to keep a spendthrift brother. That brother, he said, was now reincarnated as my father! These details were of little consequence. I scarcely thought of them, nor did my (apparently) first sight of the columned temples fill me with surprise or with the thrill of admiration that should have been expected. I felt rather a great sadness and a great loneliness, not dissimilar to the feeling with which I had revisited the ruins of my Irish days. I was conscious of a great change, of the mass of fragments on the ground, of the denuded temples, and, above all, that all my friends were dead. I seemed to stand alone in this background of the past.

Alone! There were not even any ghosts to dispel my solitude; they too, like me, were living again clothed in modern form, absorbed, engrossed in the methods of modern life.

That night the gate-keeper admitted me into the sacred precincts. A three-quarter moon played hide-and-seek among the clouds. The fluted columns of the Parthenon were brilliantly illumined, and the next moment lost again in shadowy gloom.

I had wrapped myself in a white silk shawl to obliterate my clothes that offended my æsthetic sense. Instinctively I left my shoes at the entrance of the temple that there might be no reverberation of heels upon the marble pavements. In stockinged feet I wandered among the giant columns. A soft warm wind caressed my face and played with my hair. The great stillness and the great beauty and the consciousness of the past filled me with deep emotion. I ruminated as one does on such rare occasions, when the soul plays truant to all that is mundane and material, and slips back among the gods, just for a brief space . . . just for one night.

All the misery and human suffering that I had seen at Smyrna with its reverberant reflection upon the civilization and politics of our day were obliterated from my haunted mind. I re-lived the time when there were calm and culture in our lives, when we walked with sure and balanced stride in sandalled shoes, our figures outlined by wind-blown draperies; when beauty was a moral standard.

VII

Athens parched and dusty was crowded with the remnants of its beaten army. Bedraggled soldiers filled the streets, bemedalled officers filled the cafés—refugees herded together on the shore where they were as miserable and neglected as on Turkish soil. Every hour ships arrived and kept unloading more, yet more. . . . The citizens of Athens and the government looked on coldly as much as to say, "Who are these people?" The Greeks did not recognise them as their own.

Flags were flying from the house-tops as if to celebrate victory, but in reality to celebrate revolution. They did not admit themselves defeated by the Turk, they said they had been betrayed by their ministers. The war department had appropriated funds and left the army without munitions or clothes or food, or even pay. So to save their faces for their chaotic flight, they had once more thrown out "Tino," their King, and arrested his ministers (shot them in cold blood a month later), accepted with a wry face the son of the king as figure-head, and like perfect gentlemen having (up to that moment) spilled no blood in the upheaval, settled themselves outside the cafés to talk it over and drink *apéritifs*.

The ship that bore me away was held up at sunset at the straits by a British warship, and allowed only to proceed through the Dardanelles at dawn. A British cruiser then preceded us to Chanak, which was seething with preparations for war. Both sides of the straits were being fortified, guns were being transported, all of which were easily observable, for we stopped at Chanak for several hours.

A Greek merchant who stood at my side (who took me for an American) remarked:

"That is an empty display of might. England has been unable to help Greece, her power is over. Even her moral support is worse than useless, it is misleading. She has to accept whatever the Turks demand: Smyrna, Thrace, Constantinople. . . ."

The words of a person of no importance! Had they been spoken by someone with a name, like Venizelos, they could have been published with big headlines!

At Chanak an Australian came on board who had been working for the Australian government at Gallipoli, constructing cemeteries and identifying bodies. He told me ten pounds sterling is paid to a Turk for a corpse or a skeleton. Out of 25,000 only 12,000 had been identified. Hundreds of thousands of pounds were being spent on architectural memorials, tree-planting and designing. I said to myself, they cost much, these dead, more indeed than the widows and orphans who are left.

On arrival at Constantinople I learnt the news that a peace conference was about to take place at Mudania, a little village on the coast of Anatolia, at which the Allies, with the British in predominance, were presiding.

The Péra Palace Hotel was full of fluttering, agitated newspaper men, whose consternation was the result of a British official declaration that no correspondents should be present!

Surely army generals know that whereas shot and shell and mine and gas can intimidate an enemy, there is no way of annihilating the correspondents of the press! Their job is to be wherever there is anything to tell, and anything that is particularly private or confidential is their especial business. They—that is, *we*—had obviously to reach Mudania! British authority did not prevail outside Constantinople. It was only necessary to leave in order to arrive. But how get there? There were rumours of an American destroyer, but this was cancelled. The United States authorities had no wish to be embroiled with the British.

I hovered between two groups in animated discussion, the English and the American: I could belong to either as occasion suited. The English were concerned as to the price of a tugboat and whether the expense was justified, and prominent among them the *Times* correspondent announced that it was not worth the trouble of going. Whatever news there was he would get at Constantinople. This gentleman being on especially excellent terms with General Harington as well as the British diplomatic representative, could not go against official decrees. He was the victim of his own friendships, but he affected a Britannic indifference.

The chief spirit of the American group was John Clayton of the *Chicago Tribune*, my charming and hated rival who had outstripped me by twenty-four hours at Smyrna, and queered my pitch with Mustapha Kemal. He had a keen adventurous spirt, was indefatigable and unsuppressible, constantly in trouble with the British censor! He, with an Australian, a Hungarian and a Turk, consented to take me along with them, and it was agreed that we should pool the cost of the tugboat. It was likewise agreed that we should pool for the common benefit any special news or interviews we might pick up individually at Mudania, so that neither one of us would be getting a scoop on the other. They looked very hard, I thought, at me, and I of course nodded assent.

While John Clayton was chartering a boat and the Australian was organising food, I rushed off to the passport office to reclaim my passport that had been taken from me that morning when I landed. The officials, seeing my great impatience, asked, "What's the hurry?" My evasion made them suspicious. "You know that journalists are forbidden to go to Mudania?" one said.

"Oh, yes, I know . . ." I answered.

"Do you want to go to Mudania?" persisted one, grinning as if it were a good joke.

"Well—yes!"

"I'm afraid you can't!"

I stretched out my hand for my passport, whereupon he volunteered to ring up headquarters, "and see if I can get permission for you."

"Oh, don't bother," I said, and took the passport.

A few minutes later our little mixed party with its store of bread and sausage rolls and portable typewriters was on its way.

Before we got beyond the Golden Horn a British patrol boat pursued and overtook us. The incident filled us with misgiving. Our ship's papers were, however, mercifully in order, and the presence probably of a woman was disarming. We were allowed to proceed upon our way. The six hour trip across the Marmora was a beautiful dream. The sunset behind Europe coloured the sea like shot silk, a full moon rose over Asia and illumined the night like day.

The Turkish crew had laid Oriental carpets on the little raised platform at the stern. Our little boat was so low in the water that, had one of those sudden storms arisen, we should have instantly been swamped, but the night was uncannily calm and the sea surface rippled as far as the eye could see. One by one the tired men fell asleep, and I alone lay wide awake with my face upturned to the stars, listening to the sound of the water against the boat's side, which is one of the sweetest sounds I know.

At midnight we came in sight of the little town whose very existence was unknown to the world a week before. The lights of great warships added an impressive importance. We tied up alongside the pier and Turkish sentries came and sat cross-legged on the pier's edge, their high fur caps and slung rifles silhouetted against the sky, and they smoked our cigarettes and said they were sorry it was too late to let us land.

The remainder of the night had now to be faced. There was one cabin. It was unanimously given up to me. On deck there were mosquitoes, and the air was fetid with the sickening stench of decomposing bodies, for here too refugees had been embarked as at Smyrna. The ceding to me of the cabin seemed a generous gesture, but I was shortly driven out by fleas. The deck was preferable, with a leather suitcase for a pillow, but I slept fitfully because I ached so owing to the hardness of the deck and because the mosquitoes bit me, and the moon shone down like an arc light in my face, and Turkish soldiers came on board and walked around talking volubly!

The wreck of me accompanied the others early in the morning to the Konak, or Town Hall, in the little cobblestoned village street where the conference was taking place. British, French and Italian representatives had landed at our pier from their respective warships at the same time that we landed from our tugboat. We were known to all of them and caused surprise. The French smiled, the Italians laughed, and the British frowned. There were no Greeks for the Turks would not let them land! They remained on board a disreputable old liner which flew no flag and was half hidden behind the British flagship.

The arrival of our party at the Town Hall astonished the Turks, especially as I was the only woman. Turks and Allied officers were sitting on a verandah overlooking the sea, discussing the latest developments and possibilities. I had only been among them a few minutes and was enjoying a cup of Turkish coffee when Colonel Sarou, the French military attaché, invited me to go upstairs and see Mr. Franklin Bouillon, who remained apart, refusing to be present at the conference disputes. Probably he did not want to wrangle with the British. Be that as it may, he remained hidden in a room that formed his study by day and Ismet Pasha's bedroom by night.

A fat jovial man with twinkling eyes and laughing face greeted me, and after he had had a good look at me he asked:

"And what are you doing here, madame?"

"I am going to interview you," I said.

He laughed.

"You are the *enfant terrible* of Europe! You put on an innocent face and play with bombs like a child who does not know that they can explode."

Then after some conversation, during which he seemed to be interviewing me more than I was interviewing him, he asked suddenly with a mischievous twinkle:

"May one ask, madame, where you intend to sleep to-night?"

"I shall find some place, I suppose."

Then he became suddenly serious. "We will look after you," he volunteered; and he did. He took me back with him on board the French flagship to lunch, and Admiral Dumesnil, after a whispered conversation with him, offered me hospitality. A lieutenant gave me his cabin, and I spent the next few days in the Admiral's quarters.

Here also were General Charpy and my friend Hamid Bey, the representatives of Angora. During these days Franklin Bouillon talked to me, explained to me, and dictated articles to me (which as the British censor would not pass them, were dispatched through the French Embassy). Perhaps Franklin's motive in befriending me was in order to use me as a channel for French propaganda. In that respect he resembled the Bolsheviks, who also saw in me a worth-while instrument. As then, now also I tried to retain my judgment and independence of thought, but obviously one ends by being influenced if one hears only one point of view. The British were annoyed because I was on board the French ship. But why, then, did they not offer me the protection that others considered to be my due?

The British admiral who was present at Mudania happened to be Sir Osmond de Beauvoir Brock, who in olden days was Charlie Beresford's flag captain when Peter was a midshipman in his ship. I knew him well. Admiral Dumesnil himself framed a message to him to the effect that, "Madame Sheridan is on board and would like to see you." A few minutes later, he returned to me with a very serious expression.

"Madame," he began, as if he had something of import to communicate that required prefacing, "I present you with apologies a message which I never thought I could have to deliver from a gentleman to a lady." And he made a courteous bow. The message that was signalled back and that all the ships could read was simply that Admiral Sir Osmond de Beauvoir Brock regretted that he had not time to see Mrs. Sheridan! If the message lacked the chivalry of the Admiral's high-sounding name, it was thoroughly typical of his personality such as I remember in the past at Malta. When Admiral Brock came to visit Admiral Dumesnil, Franklin and I watched the British barge come alongside, manœuvred perfectly, the bluejackets manned their boathooks like automatoms. I nudged Franklin: "*C'est chic, hein?*"

"*Chic!* I should think so!" he replied, "but expensive beyond the means of a Republic."

When John Clayton knew that I was on board the French flagship, his newspaper face clouded and my conscience smote me as I remembered our agreement to pool our news. He asked me if I had had a worth-while interview with Franklin Bouillon. I could not tell him that I saw every telegram that was exchanged between him and Kemal, that every article I wrote or news I cabled was framed word for word by Franklin and that in fact I'd got the biggest scoop that anyone could hope for.

To English people as a whole the name of Franklin Bouillon was anathema. He was supposed to represent everything that was anti-British. Maybe he fooled me, but at all events the impression that I got was quite different. I would not have consented to send cables to America that wronged my own country, and Franklin did not ask me to. But my sympathies were with the Turks, and as Kemal said, so were the sympathies of the English people: it was only my Government that entertained a contrary policy, and who having backed the wrong horse, had landed themselves into a perturbing position.

I openly tackled Franklin on his reputed enmity to England. He disclaimed most emphatically that he either disliked or worked against the English, he worked for France, and he explained: "France is a most loyal ally, and wants only to prevent England from adopting a surely disastrous course. France also wants to protect the Turkish people whose cause is just."

His mother was English, and he spoke our language before he spoke his own. He had two very distinct sides to his nature. He was very *moqueur* and very emotional. He had a passion for music and said that he would rather have been a composer than a politician. He had given up years of his life, however, to Eastern problems and Eastern people because they appealed to him; it was entirely owing to his friendship with Mustapha Kemal that the war stopped when it did (fifteen days before the conference). The telegrams which brought about this phenomenon were as follows:

"I beg you for the sake of our old friendship and in memory of fateful days past, to cease all military movements and reply to no diplomatic note, at lest until you have seen me. Your friend, Franklin Bouillon."

And the reply:

"I await your arrival. Come at once. Your friend, Kemal."

After this it was agreed between the French and Lord Curzon in Paris that Franklin Bouillon should leave for the East.

When Ismet Pasha was asked by a group of international journalists to explain the part that Franklin Bouillon had played, he answered:

"Franklin Bouillon has done what the whole world could not succeed in doing, he has stopped our army from fighting for a fortnight!"

But could this armistice be maintained? Franklin had arrived in the hope of maintaining it; his one aim and object was that armistice might evolve into permanent peace. But meanwhile every day that passed was a day gained to the Greeks for reorganization should war proceed; time therefore counted against the Turks. Turkish strategy was to follow up their blow with another, to hit again and hit hard, before the opponent had time to regain breath. They were naturally impatient of the delay enforced by the conference. At quickest it took three days for a wireless message and reply to reach Mudania from Paris. Lord Curzon and Poincaré were known to be conferring, but events had happened so suddenly that neither Government had had time to discuss and agree upon their respective and combined policies.

October the 8th was the great day of tension, during which the situation hung upon a thread. No one was sure if we were assisting at peace-making or at war-making. All day the news fluctuated from good to bad with the caprice of an April wind.

At midday the news clouded. I sat next to Franklin at lunch. He tried to mask his feelings, he made witty remarks, but with tears in his eyes. I watched and listened and tried to glean the latest news, rather as one hovers outside a sick chamber, awaiting the doctor's bulletin. All afternoon we waited. Franklin was on the verge of despair. He had tried so hard, he said, to keep the peace, he could do no more. He ordered his cruiser to be in readiness to take him back as he might have ordered his car. I sat with him after dinner on the deck of the *Edgar Quinet* while he wrote a final eloquent appeal to Mustapha Kemal:

"For the sake of world peace, it is your duty to accept the settlement that is offered you and which in no way conflicts with Turkish prestige."

There was a golden moon that night, that shone down upon the snowy mountain peaks. Franklin paced back and forth, a prey to violent agitation. He needed to disburden himself of the things that filled his mind. He called me:

"Come here, my *petite élève*, and listen to me." (He called me his "*élève*" because he had been a journalist once, and he said I needed training.) "Listen to what I say ——" and he poured forth in a rapid passionate flow, a synthesis of the Turkish situation.

"Understand, these people are animated with a sense of nationalism that is undefeatable—the world does not know, does not realize this new Turkey which is born out of the War. This crisis is created by false politics—the English and American papers speak only of massacres by the Turks, they do not seem to know that between Eski-Shehir and Smyrna the Greek army has burned every town and village —and killed all the inhabitants. A million Turks are roving homeless and naked on the roads of Anatolia." Then suddenly he broke off, and in an aside exclaimed: "Mon Dieu! In advocating peace what a responsibility I am taking upon myself, towards the Angora government."

I wondered in that pulsating moment if he doubted perhaps the loyalty towards his enterprise of the government whose emissary he was. Can one ever count on governments? He adopted the methods of an autocrat, but would he succeed? It was an anxious moment, but he was very courageous, he had the power of his convictions.

That night there was no sleep. Everyone waited for the decisive news, expecting a declaration of war to be announced by the twinkling lights of the wireless at that point of the masthead. Our hearts were heavy—*so* heavy.

Early the next morning Kemal's dramatically simple answer was handed to Franklin:

"Your advice has been adopted. His Excellency Ismet Pasha is authorized to sign the convention immediately."

Franklin rushed ashore excitedly. The tension was broken: it was peace *not* war. But when the little deaf *Maréchal* understood the context of the telegram, there were tears in his eyes and he shook his head:

"It is not what I hoped," he said, "it is not the reward that our sacrifice deserves."

Franklin, with an arm round Ismet's shoulder, assured him that his country was bigger that day in giving way for the sake of world peace "than at Afiun Karahissar when your army was defeating the enemy that had devastated your land."

This oratory was capped characteristically by Ismet:

"It is your day of triumph, my friend, and my disappointment must be obliterated in your joy."

And then the British proclaimed that peace was entirely due to their show of force!

At last in the blue dawn of October 11th, after a night of vigil in the Konak (while inexperienced typists made five copies of the peace document for each and all to sign) we were summoned to the Council Chamber. In an uncanny silence the papers were handed round from General Harington to the Italian General Monbelli, from him to Ismet Pasha, and so to General Charpy. Everyone showed signs of strain, the beards of the men had grown visibly during the night. At that moment there was a strange noise from the Greek ship in the harbour. "A groan from the Greeks," said someone. It was a reminder of their existence. It sounded like a final protest from the people whom the conference concerned in the main, who had taken no part in the discussions and whose general (Mazarakis) according to the announcement of Ismet Pasha, refused to sign. They were being disposed of as though they had no will of their own.

When someone stepped on a dog and a newspaper man with a kodak fell off the table, one felt an irresistible desire to giggle idiotically. Then General Harington nervously made a little speech. He said: "We met as strangers, but we part as friends." Ismet Pasha, so deaf that all compliments were wasted on him, replied with perfect self-possession that the anxious day of Mudania would be among his happiest memories! The Turkish military band that had played Turkish tunes throughout the night now gave vent to a triumphant march, and we all went back to our ships for eggs and coffee, and every ship weighed anchor as quickly as possible and steamed away at full speed.

On arrival at Constantinople we found that innumerable British troopships had arrived with reinforcements. A Red Cross ship brilliantly painted red and white was ready for emergency. As the *Edgar Quinet* passed the British flagship they played "The Marseillaise" and we replied with "God save . . ." and thus all ended well that might have ended so disastrously.

VIII

Where next?

The rest of the world seemed prosaic and colourless after the heights and emotions Turkey had provided. Someone said that Stamboulisky, the shepherd premier of Bulgaria, was a personality worth knowing. I felt the keenness of a collector. Apart from my journalism, personalities interested me as specimens. In no other way but as a journalist could I get to know such people, and my idea was to make every use of my opportunities while they lasted. I do not know if as the correspondent of an English paper I would have had the same facilities. United States neutrality seemed to be of great value. America stood aloof and her sympathy was being courted. Western Europe needed money for countless famine and refugee problems; America generously supplied the funds. Politically America was not implicated in any intrigues and aroused no hates. I was received everywhere with courtesy and consideration.

With incredible sang-froid I telegraphed to Stamboulisky that I was arriving expressly for an interview! And I took the train for Sofia.

It was a day and a night's journey from Constantinople, and the way lay across desolate Thrace. From the train window I observed the evacuations. The Greek population was leaving hurriedly to give place to the incoming Turks.

Whole villages were deserted, the doors of the houses wide open and hungry dogs left in possession.

I was reminded of a house that had been let, the outgoing people had removed all their possessions and left much litter, the new people had not come, and when they did they would find much to clear up.

On arrival at Sofia there was not a room to be had. There were only two hotels and they were full. I bluffed outrageously about "my friend the Prime Minister," with whom I said I must communicate at once, whereupon the manager offered me the room of someone who was absent, if I did not mind the absentee's belongings. I certainly did not mind, I was thankful to find any place to lay my head. While I was in my bath someone called out in English, "Is Mrs. Sheridan there? I am the Prime Minister's secretary." It was a woman's voice, so I wrapped my bath towel around me and opened the door ajar. A charming young girl stood there, who said she was Nadejda Stancioff, and that in reply to my telegram asking for an interview Stamboulisky had sent her to make an appointment. I had already heard much of interest concerning Nadejda. She was the daughter of the Bulgarian Minister to London. She had become internationally known at the Geneva Conference where she acted as interpreter for Stamboulisky, who could only speak Bulgarian, and she was the only woman interpreter who ever appeared on the platform of the League of Nations. She spoke French, German and Russian as fluently as she spoke English. Her personality contrasted amusingly with that of her Chief. Stamboulisky was a peasant with wild hair, a turned-up nose, small eyes and a bulky frame. Nadejda was tall, slim, frail, pale and refined. She had curious mystic eyes and a calm assurance of manner. She managed Stamboulisky, and for a time the fortunes of Bulgaria. Beneath her modest demeanour was the force of a man. She looked as if she were velvet, but she was really steel, although her family represented all that was most traditional and conservative. Nadejda threw herself into the Agrarian Minister's socialistic schemes with a loyalty that bordered on fervour. A great career lay before her, she was expected shortly to take up a diplomatic post in Washington which would have ranked her the second woman diplomatist in the world (the other being Madame Kolantai, the Soviet Russian ambassador), but two things eventually happened to frustrate this. The one unforeseen: Stamboulisky was murdered a year later; the other inevitable: Nadejda married. She became the wife of Sir Alexander Kay Muir, of Blair Drummond.

As soon as I was dressed she carried me off to my interview. Stamboulisky paid me innumerable blatant compliments, all of which Nadejda translated with a solemnity and an exactitude worthy of more momentous communications. No one has ever been quite sure whether Stamboulisky was very clever, or whether he only appeared so through the medium of Nadejda. Personally I could form no opinion. I should have said he was shrewd but not brilliant, the shrewdness of the Slav peasant. For twenty years he had devoted himself to agrarian questions and had organized the peasants into a party. Some of his laws were labelled Bolshevik by the world that looked on. Chief of these, over which he seemed inordinately pleased, was the law of compulsory labour, which necessitated that every boy of twenty should give six months, and every girl of twenty should give four months, to the State, and after that ten days every year until the age of fifty, except the married women who were exempt up to thirty. There were of course protests from the daughters of the affluent, and they hastily sought marriage as a means of escape. A big percentage, however, offered to work for twenty instead of ten days a year. On the whole he claimed it was a success and that it was worth large sums to the State.

Another decree that was regarded as Bolshevik concerned the division of property. No one might own more than thirty hectares of land. Big properties were being broken up and compensated for at pre-war values, causing much indignation among big landowners!

"I am regarded as a Bolshevik," said the Prime Minister, "but I want you to understand the difference between us: we desire that every peasant should own his land, whereas the Bolsheviks insist that everything should be State owned. Besides, the Soviet is a dictatorship, ours is a democracy. I liken the social system of our civilization to a great old tree. The Bolsheviks said the tree was too old and cut it down. Now we, appreciating the time it has taken that tree to grow, have merely trimmed the branches that overhung and kept out the sun."

And then he got on to the subject so dear to his heart, and for which he had pleaded and stormed at international conferences: Bulgaria *must* have her outlet to the Ægean. It was promised to her in the Treaty of Neuilly. Whoever opposed that would be Bulgaria's enemy. Bulgaria's policy, however, was to have peace: "until now we have fought all our neighbours except the Black Sea," he said, but it was time to turn to culture and reforms. He mischievously referred to a neighbour who was always boasting her size and new territorial acquisitions and who affected a great Balkan superiority, but who as a matter of fact had far fewer schools and a higher percentage of illiterates than Bulgaria. Stamboulisky believed his party would be in power another fifteen years, but he intended, he said, to lead it only through its stormy days. "As soon as there is calm, I shall retire from public life to write my experiences."

He invited me to come back the following summer and bring my children; he would contrive a holiday at the same time and we would spend it in the famous *Vallée des Roses*. It was a pity, he said, that I was not a Bulgarian, he would make good use of me.

"We need women like you, and like Mademoiselle Stancioff." And I thought to myself that although it is a great satisfaction to belong to a big nation, there are greater opportunities if one belongs to a small one.

As I got up to leave, the Minister asked if I would like to have an "audience" of the King, and Nadejda promised to arrange it.

The next morning before I was awake the King's secretary was announced. He had walked up six flights of stairs and stood outside my bedroom door while he sent in his card. I flung on my overcoat, powdered my nose and went out on to the landing. A middle-aged gentleman with a beard bowed low, and said the King would be pleased to receive me at 11.30. The Palace he pointed out was just across the Square opposite the hotel! I requested him to be good enough to return and fetch me, for I did not fancy penetrating into the precincts by myself.

The Palace had a curious air of quietude, as if metaphorically the King whispered and walked on tiptoe so as not to attract attention. So long as he remained quiet he might remain undisturbed, and he certainly lived quietly with his two sisters in the shadow of great uncertainty in the midst of this peasant-governed land.

King Boris (the son of Ferdinand, who because he chose to side with Germany in the War had been dethroned by defeat) was a young man of twenty-eight, with a narrow well-bred face and beautiful hands, rather sad and serious and lonely. He received me in a big room that looked like a study rather than a drawing-room, and four sets of doors confirmed his privacy. He was pleasant mannered, simple and easy to talk to. Careful without being cautious, liberal without being extreme. We discussed the new changes that had taken place so recently in Eastern Europe, and which were uppermost in Balkan minds. This led us inevitably to Russia (I felt it was but a shallow step from Bulgaria to Bolshevism, and it was rather piquant to discuss Bolshevism with a king!). He attributed Russia's chief problems to the condition of her railways, a subject which interested him very much, and concerning which he was well informed.

"I judge of countries by their railways!" he said, and added that he read all the papers and magazines dealing with this subject in all countries. Just as Louis XVI was by vocation a locksmith, so King Boris was an engine-driver, although this was quite out of keeping with his ascetic appearance and his delicate hands and wrists, carrying four gold chain bracelets around each.

With surprising breadth of view concerning Russia, he remarked that it was rather absurd to criticize, since Western European conditions did not present a very glowing alternative. He compared Europe to a broken fragmentary cinematograph, ever changing and without sequence. I described to him the horrors of Smyrna. He had just seen Dr. Nansen, who in almost the same words had described the horrors of Thrace. These stories seemed to affect him with a kind of impotent sadness. He said:

"We, in the Balkan countries, have seen so many movements of masses abandoning territories, it has become almost a familiar scene to us, though none the less terrible." And then with impressive warning, "I do not think the world can stand a great deal more strain."

I told him that Stamboulisky had invited me to return the following summer. He smiled, said it was an excellent idea, and that he would be pleased to see me again—but, he added fatalistically, "changes happen; who can say what we will do next year?"

And who knows indeed whether, if Stamboulisky had lived, I might not have settled eventually in friendly, beautiful Bulgaria? But it was written otherwise!

IX

When I left Sofia, I was not allowed to pay for my ticket, but was informed that I was the guest of Bulgaria until I reached the frontier. At Rustchuk on the Danube, uniformed officials boarded the train and asked for me. They were the Chief of Police, the Chief of the Passport Department, and the Chief of the Customs, with an interpreter. They had received orders to meet me and see me safely across the frontier. This evoked considerable excitement among the passengers, who could not make out whether I was a royal personage or an undesirable one being escorted out of the country.

My escort gave me luncheon and then accompanied me in the ferry boat to the Rumanian side. But for their help I never should have succeeded in getting into Rumania, for seeing that my visa had been given to me in Constantinople, the Rumanians declared I had the plague, and did not want to let me pass. The Bulgarian officials assured them that I had developed no signs of plague in Sofia, and I assured them that I had not even heard of any plague except the Allies in Constantinople!

Much hostility prevailed between the Rumanian and Bulgarian frontier guards, but in the end, after a visit to the doctor, who said I must be examined periodically in Bukarest (like a dog suspected of rabies!) I was allowed into Rumania. From that moment I experienced only difficulties, hostilities, suspicions, incivility and discomfort. I understood why I had heard only bitter criticism of Rumania from every journalist in Constantinople.

With great pride the people of Rumania refer to Bukarest as "Little Paris," although in what respect I failed to discover. It was the most pretentious and uncomfortable town I ever was in. To begin with, 800,000 people were trying to fit into a capital that had accommodated 300,000 before the War. Nothing had been done to cope with the congestion. As the Government controlled hotel prices there was no inducement to private enterprise to build new ones. The main water-pipes which had been destroyed during the German occupation had not been restored. During a few hours of the day only, a meagre water supply was distributed to the town. After a rainfall the streets were overwhelmed by that "fourth element," as Napoleon called *mud*, and no attempt was made to clear it away.

Overdressed women and overpainted men paraded the streets.

The impossibility of finding a room in an hotel was so real that I was obliged to seek refuge in the house of a casual acquaintance, one I had met months before on the train between Dover and Paris, and whose invitation and name I had happily remembered. He was a young Spanish Jew, a director of the famous eastern bank of Marmarosh Blank & Co. As always on my travels I adopt the attitude of Walt Whitman:

> "Stranger, if you passing meet me, and desire to speak to me, why should you not speak to me? And why should I not speak to you?"

and I had spoken with the little Spaniard who with a large car had undertaken to show me Paris for a week. His acquaintance proved worth while indeed: he gave me the hospitality of his house so long as I needed it. Had he not been available it is hard to imagine what would have become of me; the fact is that in all situations something happens, and it is the manner of their unravelling that is the charm of "situations."

I had only one object in going to Rumania, and that was "to visit the Queen." She had just been crowned in Transylvania. The King too, of course, but nobody mentioned him. The Queen, in a large crown, newly-made for the occasion, featured very beautifully on picture postcards throughout the town. The festivities were over; absurd precautions to safeguard the royal family's lives had evoked humorous Balkan comment, no one had been murdered (only the rain had drenched the procession), the people had been kept well away, so no one had seen the show, and the royal family had returned well satisfied to the rustic tranquillity of their Sinaia forests.

I waited in Bukarest for my application to receive response, and then I took train for Sinaia.

In a little valley between the wooded mountains stood a castle that seemed to have been transplanted from Nürnberg. Inside the palace I was received by a music hall dancer, Loie Fuller, who long ago invented "luminous light" dances, but was now grown old. She had become a dependent of the Rumanian court and acted as intermediary for those who, in order to meet the Queen or to acquire an autographed photograph, paid large sums to Rumanian charities.

In a room at the top of the house with walls painted with white lilies against a background of gold, Queen Marie, dressed in Rumanian national costume, stood with studied effect against a coloured window. Her head was blue turbaned over a flowing white veil. I said to myself, "Well done!" It was a good effect, although a little obvious. On a man perhaps it might have had the desired effect, but on a woman ——

She motioned me to a place on a sofa by her side and then let loose upon me a flow of indignation because I had associated with the murderous people who had destroyed her Russian relatives. I could not make out if her sentiment for the royal family was one of personal affection or whether it was inspired by horror of the threat involved to royalty in the abstract. She did not seem to appreciate that it was the extinction of Russian Imperialism that had enabled Rumania to aggrandize her kingdom, that it was the chaos involved by Russian revolution that had enabled Rumania to annex Bessarabia without a fight. Once I tried to interrupt, but without much success, until the Queen haughtily observed:

"I know, of course, why you want to see me; I am interesting because I am a Queen." In a way this was a poor compliment to herself, it was also a challenge that I could not resist. I forced an interruption.

"You do not interest me as a Queen. You interest me only as an artist."

She hesitated, and I could not tell if she were annoyed or pleased. At all events she did not let me see her artist side, but continued to unburden her queenly feelings:

"I consented to receive you in order to show you how large-minded I am."

As she talked her mouth grew hard, her eyes too, which were transparently blue. I admired her because I admire people who feel violently and not neutrally about things.

For over an hour conversation (if conversation it could be called that was entirely one-sided) followed the same theme. Virulent abuse of the Bolsheviks, whose hospitality I had dared to accept. She said bitter things too about the King of Italy for receiving Chicherin, so I felt I was at least in good company.

I had been told that Queen Marie cherished the dream of seeing her sister, who married the Grand Duke Cyril, become some day Czarina of Russia! Vain hope if one may dare to prophesy. Finally, after I had listened politely and coldly to all she had to say, attempting neither explanation nor excuse, she turned upon me angrily and reproached my attitude of indifference and detachment. One had no right, she said, to be an onlooker in the world. Her anger made me feel more detached than ever.

X

At Mudania when my Turkish friends said good-bye they added "we shall meet again soon." Having successfully marked time in Bulgaria and Rumania, the Lausanne Conference was now assembling, and here in truth we all did meet again. The Swiss hotels were full of Turks who, having cast aside kalpak and fez, looked extremely ordinary. "One must look like everyone else when one goes abroad," they said. Ismet Pasha and Lord Curzon in tall hats and carrying little gripsacks looked like doctors on their rounds!

After twenty-four hours in Lausanne I realized that the Conference was going to be long, secret and dull. I had been spoilt by the dramatic conference of Mudania in which one seemed really to be taking a part. Even at Geneva in September the League of Nations had admitted one to its councils. But at Lausanne the Press were admitted nowhere. They hung about the *foyers* of the hotels, trying to waylay those of importance who passed through and who might have information. There were of course official communications given out by each nation to its press representatives after every session, but these official *communiqués* were more in the nature of propaganda than of news, more suitable for press agencies than for special correspondents. As each nationality gave out its own official point of view one could glean at least seven varying stories of the same session. There was the British, the Turkish, the Russian, the French, the Italian, the Rumanian and the Bulgarian. It was like an art class, where everyone paints the same landscape, and no two artists see it in the same way.

The dullness was enlivened at the moment of my arrival by the presence of Mussolini. He had just accomplished his *coup d'état*, had been much talked of and little seen. It was, so to speak, his public début. I was awakened my first morning by a shrill feminine voice in the street, conversing with a friend at an upper window. It said:

"I'm waiting about for Mussolini—I must see him—I'd wait hours to see him—I'm not interested in any others."

Inside the Hôtel Beau Rivage much the same psychology prevailed. Nobody was interested in anyone but Mussolini. When he appeared in the *foyer* surrounded by his bodyguard of young Fascists there was a flutter of excitement. He was obviously conscious of the interest he excited, but he masked it by an expression of pride and disdain. I, like the rest, applied for an interview, and four different

Italian friends promised to arrange it. They seemed amused, and were curious perhaps as to the result of my reputed Bolshevism faced with the leader of Fascism.

I was having tea with Rouchen Eschref Bey, the poet friend of Mustapha Kemal, when Mussolini's messenger announced with great ceremony that *Le Président du Conseil* would receive me immediately. I left Rouchen, whose Oriental calm was rather surprised by my excited haste. Mussolini had (I learnt afterwards) ordered that we should be alone for this interview. I was ushered into his sitting-room, that contained a huge bunch of flowers tied with Italian colours. He kept me waiting just long enough to make an effect, and then appeared from the adjoining room and looked at me with fierce solemnity and enormous bulgy eyes that showed the whites all round them. My first instinct was to laugh. A sort of levity seized me; what cared I about his international political views, or his attitude to the working classes or any other abstract subject? What interested me was the real nature of the man behind his Napoleonic disguise. He broke the silence first by saying he knew me, and all about me: "You admire the Bolsheviks—a great mistake, but then their glamour blinded you. You should see my glorious young Fascisti!"

This cleared the air. He talked forcibly, and at the end of each sentence he snapped his jaw with a cruel and contemptuous finality, looked away from me, tossed his head, closed his eyes; and sat rigid, as though awaiting my turn.

I would have preferred just to sit and watch him and not have to talk, but as the occasion necessitated speech, why not try something provocative and see if he would rise to it? So I referred to the awakening of the people and to the Bolshevik ideal concerning it. He exploded:

"The *people?* What does the word signify? And *what* are the people? What is this vague herd that I hear about? I only recognize what I can touch, measure with my eye, *bend*"—he repeated the word several times, "*plier,*" with an accompanying gesture to emphasize his meaning. He said it as if it gave him the deepest satisfaction to force, to bend, to break if necessary, people to his will. The masses always had, he said, always would and always must be governed by a strong minority. "Inequality and discipline, these are the substitutes for equality and liberty. The people have been deceived—*le peuple a été trompé*—but we have started a new world—in the future the people are to be told *the truth* (I thought to myself, this is indeed a new era!) I tell them hard things. I do not want their applause. They are stupid and dirty and do not work enough. They are content with their little cinema shows—they must not aspire to take part in the political life of the nation. They must be taken care of and their interests safeguarded, and their duty is to *obey!*

"Obey," he repeated fiercely, and looked at me with a frown. I did not then understand that his pose was always to intimidate. He aroused in me all the militant sensations that had been slumbering so peacefully in the shade of my independence.

"I cannot stand the word," I said, remembering how I had left it out of my marriage vows! "And I cannot stand the way you say it!"

A desire to dominate everyone and everything was evident in his whole attitude; he probably shared the general illusion that women like it. He gave me a comprehensive look. "*Obedience* is a most important thing to learn, but you, well you—are *une revoltée*," and then with a sudden change of tone and looking at me intently:

"How is it that you, *une artiste*, can uphold the fallacies of equality and democracy, which, if realized, would eliminate all beauty and individuality from life?" And then closing his eyes with an expression of unspeakable horror:

"What an intolerable world it would be!" he ejaculated.

He seemed to have an appreciation of beauty that was typically Latin. How he reconciled force and beauty together I do not know. He mentioned the days of the Borgias as being really magnificent. If the Borgia period were his ideal might I not be justified in grinding down a diamond and adding it to his vermicelli soup? The Borgia game is a game that two can play! When he turned his huge epileptic eyes upon me I could not tell whether he was laughing or scolding.

Finally he said: "You modelled the portraits of *ces gens* in the Kremlin, and they impressed you?"

"Profoundly—they had ideas, big ideas ——" I began. He interrupted:

"Come to Rome—come and see my Fascisti in all the *gloire de leur jeunesse*."

"Willingly," I answered. "When do you start?"

"To-night ——"

It was then six o'clock. I came out on to the landing thronged with Italians of all sorts, newspaper correspondents, diplomatic secretaries, Fascist guards, and so on. Among them I had some friends; they crowded round me to know my impression. I saw at once by their *moqueur* faces that they expected the obvious. A woman, even a Bolshevik woman, could not fail to "fall" for their Chief! "He's marvellous!" I said; whereupon they laughed in that peculiar, derisive, Italian way.

"Madame!" exclaimed the correspondent of the *Stampa di Torino*, whom I had known at Mudania; "Madame, how can you be taken in like that?"

"Who said I was taken in? I desire to study this human phenomenon in his own background. At what time does the train leave for Rome?"

They gasped, and one said he would take my ticket, order my *couchette* and accompany me. We left at midnight.

XI

It was a strange journey to Milan. Once the frontier was passed there were Fascist crowds at every station, and they sang the Fascist hymn, which has a haunting refrain. One could tell by the sound of their strong clear voices in the night that they were men, and young. They sang with impressive fervour, and their cheers as the train moved on were spontaneous, unordered, enthusiastic.

All night long, half waking, half sleeping, I seemed to hear the refrain of that Fascist march.

No wonder Mussolini despises the "herd" as he contemptuously called the masses. They lend themselves too readily, first to one experiment and then to another. Suffice for them a strong leader and a few slogans, and they will follow to the death!

At Milan Mussolini and his suite stopped a day. Milan was the great man's home. His wife inhabited Milan, and not his wife only. As he explained to me one evening later, life had become rather complicated in his quality of head of the state. He was always being watched and guarded over. Once, when he tried to evade his bodyguard, he found himself followed by a detective on a bicycle. "I was obliged to stop and command him not to follow me. The detective was only doing his duty and so threats were an injustice and of course he guessed my mission, but that could not be helped!"

Thus, Mussolini was always rather tired when he left Milan, and on the second night of our journey to Rome orders were telegraphed ahead that there were to be no demonstrations at the stations on the route, as the President of the Council desired to sleep.

We arrived in Rome on November 24th. Glorious sunshine and excited crowds welcomed him. He raised his hat in answer to salutations and walked disdainfully, looking neither to the right nor to the left. The crowd had a feminine psychology, the more indifferent he appeared, the more he seemed to be adored. These people who such a short time before had been shouting "*A basso Jesu-Christo, eviva Lenin,*" were metaphorically kissing the large white-spatted feet of the conqueror who had turned upon them their own weapon of violence. No wonder he walked by them so disdainfully.

The Grand Hôtel was Mussolini's temporary headquarters. This mundane exotic international centre, the background of cliques, intrigues and society gossip, was thronged with Fascist detectives. The more serious element in Rome criticized him for living there.

He sent a messenger to fetch me at 9 o'clock that evening, but the Roman season was in full swing and I was dancing. The next night he sent for me at half-past seven. He was just finishing a frugal meal that was served on a tray. He apologized for not having invited me, but "one can only work well if one does not eat much," he said, and poured me out a glass of wine and offered me some fruit, which in parenthesis he admired for their beauty of form and colour. I looked round the room: it was the ordinary untouched hotel *salon*. There was no trace of the personality of its occupant except a life-sized oil painting of himself. He was in a calm, communicative mood, less theatrical than at Lausanne; tired, perhaps, and inclined to regard me as a relaxation rather than a newspaper correspondent. My objective was indeed entirely forgotten by us both. He talked a little of his parentage—his father was a blacksmith, his mother a school teacher. They came of a line of peasants. He likened the peasant strain to a plant that flourishes for years and then suddenly throws up a flower.

His mother was sensitive and refined, and this strangely contrasted mating produced the son whom she very soon began to regard as an elemental. She loved him in spite of his impetuous and tempestuous nature. He was always fighting and invariably returned home with a broken head. She died early in her forties and is buried in some remote village churchyard where her grave is always heaped high with flowers brought by the Fascist youth of the locality, in tribute.

"Why don't you have your wife with you in Rome?" I asked indiscreetly. He made a grimace of horror.

"Never!" and did not explain.

(No one has yet heard of Mussolini appearing anywhere with his wife; she would seem to be as completely hidden as an Arab woman.)

"Women!" and he ground his teeth savagely, "women make one suffer. I do not care for women. And children . . . are all the same; after the age of eight they become *des petits vicieux!*"

He went on to talk of his detachment from material things, women and children included, and luxury and *comfort.* He reproached the British for inventing the word.

"Comfort of body implies comfort of mind, a deplorable condition!"

"And yet you have settled yourself in the most comfortable hotel in Rome!" I said. He made a sweeping gesture.

"I do not care whether I am here or somewhere else; I do not care whether it is comfortable or not—I care for nothing—neither money nor possessions, nor—"

"Then what do you care for?" I interrupted.

He got up from his place on the sofa next to me and walked across the room, staring Napoleonically before him. His walk, however, struck me as more the shuffling step of a defiant child than the decisive firm step of a man. There was something grotesquely absurd about his feet. They retained their comic character at the very moment when their owner desired to be most impressive.

Suddenly he turned towards me, and in reply to my question, he clenched his teeth:

"Power!" he said slowly and with emphasis.

"Then you've got what you want!"

He nodded. I asked again:

"Do you know what you mean to do with it?"

"Yes," and he proceeded to outline some of his plans. They included first, considerations for the amelioration of the masses.

"But I thought you said that you despised *le peuple*," I reminded him.

"*Mon amour pour le peuple est mon amour pour le printemps*," he replied, though what connection there could be between the two to prompt this simile I refrained from asking. But remembering the impatience with which he talked of "the people" at Lausanne, this inconsistency aroused in me for the first time a suspicion of his instability of opinion. He proceeded to tell me that the people should have good wages, an eight-hour work day, decent clothes, food and education facilities, as well as theatres and cinemas to help to make life tolerable, "but they must in no way interfere in the political life of the nation," he insisted. "The people have confidence in me; those who oppose me are so feeble they can hardly be called an opposition. I guarantee that the people are going to be satisfied. I shall not disappoint them. I do not lie to them, I do not promise them paradise, I only promise them the truth, but . . ." and then he lowered his voice and added: "I am not so sure about the bourgeois, that they are going to be satisfied!"

It was as if he suddenly had reverted to his old Socialism. It certainly was a strange remark for one who is reputed heavily subsidized by the industrialists of his country. I asked him how it was possible for him to have changed from the Socialist he was into what he had become.

"German militarism," he answered; "that is what changed me. Do you remember what the German Socialists did when war broke out?"

All I knew about the German Socialists before the war is that they belonged to the Second International, whose idea was in case of a call to arms to refuse to fight. And had they united and refused to fight there could indeed have been no war. Instead, they joined up without a murmur, fought against their "brother workers of the world," and broke up the Second International. Small wonder, if Mussolini was a sincere Socialist at heart, that he was bitterly disillusioned and realized the futility of theories that Socialists had not the courage to apply. Be that as it may he broke off the discussion abruptly, as if the memory of his transformation were unpleasant or bitter. It moved him, however, to philosophize.

He said that in order to succeed in life one must make one's heart into a desert. In his own heart he said there was no oasis, but desert only. If he loved anything it was youth in the abstract. He had a horror of old age, the mere thought of it made him shudder. He emitted extraordinary animal-like grunts and groans to illustrate his abhorrence of old age.

"But age has dignity," I said.

"There is no dignity except in strength," he answered, and then descending to a personal level he asked with a curious nervousness:

"What age would you suppose I am?"

I hesitated, and was about to give him, as one would to a vain woman, years that I believed considerably less than the accurate number, but he looked at me with such fearful apprehension that I was moved to pity, and finally laughed and declared I could not guess. At this he seemed relieved and did not insist. Meanwhile I remembered that someone had been waiting three-quarters of an hour to take me out to dinner, but I could not induce myself to break up this tête-à-tête so long as it remained interesting.

"You are a young woman," he said after a pause, "why do you interest yourself in problems and in politics? Why don't you live your full life and leave the problems to take care of themselves? In the background of your mind, you are always asking about the *pourquoi, dans la vie*, and there is no *pourquoi*."

"I question in order to understand, and I must understand in order to believe," I said.

He looked at me for the first time indulgently:

"And what have you learned from me? Have I not shaken your ideas? (*Est-ce que je ne vous ai pas bouleversé les idées?*)"

"Yes," I answered, as if I were a scholar under examination, "I am learning that there is no such thing as right and wrong. What succeeds is force [he nodded approval] and courage [he nodded again] and individuality."

He patted my arm as though I had learned my lesson well. Then I got up:

"Someone is waiting for me," I said. Mussolini too was due at the first night of Sarah Bernhardt (he who hated old age!) He said ironically:

"Of course you are hungry—go and eat. Above all never let your enthusiasm rob you of your appetite."

At the door he kissed my hand like Trotzki without a smile and reminded me grimly: "Above all, keep your heart a desert!"

The next night he sent for me again, and I brought with me the photographs of my sculpture, with the intention of trying to induce him to let me do his bust. He had already half promised. The photographs seemed to interest him, he was full of praise and told me to get the materials together and begin him the very next evening in that room. He would have a sheet put on the floor to save the hotel carpet, and so on, every detail was discussed and agreed upon. But I noticed he was restless, and rather disconnected. I imagined the burden of overwork and left him early. He looked at me in a curious way as if he had something more to say and would retain me, then he made a sound that was more a growl than a salutation, and let me go. These incoherent sounds were very typical of him.

It took me the whole of the next day to collect materials, in spite of the fact that I was in the art centre of the world. That evening I again presented myself at the hour indicated. Mussolini was in a fierce and sullen mood. He received me with a set expression on his menacing face and to my dismay bolted the door upon us. I pretended not to notice and hoped it was prompted by a genuine desire that our work should be uninterrupted. He made me sit down on the sofa, next to him, and seemed anxious to talk. He began by saying that hitherto he had treated me *en amie* instead of *en journaliste.*

"*Vous êtes une femme pour laquelle on pourrait avoir une grande passion,*" and he blamed himself for having said too much.

"I have thought it over and have decided that whatever happens you are not to write about me——" (Not write about Mussolini for the *New York World?* Impossible!) He read my rebellion in my eyes.

"If you publish anything about me I shall know it. Even from China the news cuttings would be sent to me, and if among them I chance to come across anything signed by your name, I shall have you pursued by my Fascist police, and there is not a country in the world in which you will be safe."

This was too much, I laughed.

"I was not afraid of the Bolsheviks, I am certainly not going to be afraid of you."

"The Bolsheviks!" he exclaimed scornfully, "are pacifists. Nobody need be afraid of them, but the Fascisti are people who believe in violence!"

He proceeded to apply the principle, and whatever I *might* have expected in Russia I experienced that night in Rome. To Russia I went prepared for every eventuality, and counted the risk worth while, instead I received only courtesy and kindness. Fascist hospitality however, was bestially transformed. If this were Mussolini's method of preventing me from writing about him, he succeeded. It remains unwritable.

The next morning insult was added to injury. The following note was handed to me:

"MADAME,

"Je vous prie instamment de vouloir renvoyer ma première pose pour ce buste fameux, que je ne désire pas; je n'aime pas les monuments faits aux vivants. Leur resultat est de vieillir.

"Cordialité sincère,

"MUSSOLINI."

Did he really suppose that I would return to his room to begin that bust? Or did his vanity desire for himself the last word? In which case he won. I would have tolerated a great deal in order to sculpt that head—a great deal, yes, but not *so* much. I shall regret always that I did not manage to reach at least the second sitting.

When I got back to Lausanne on December 4th, the conference that had been so somnolent had suddenly begun to stir. The Russians had arrived! Chicherin, Rakovski and Worofski (who was murdered there a few months later) were there and all their Communist suite. The Russians were the only people who were not overwhelmed with conference seriousness. They seemed imbued with the spirit of Puck, they upset everybody, they, so to speak, laughed behind the doors. All the other members of the conference were awed and overruled by Lord Curzon, but Chicherin, with his pointed beard and small twinkling eyes, and a pedigree that could out-Curzon Curzon, remained utterly unimpressed and mischievously cheerful as if he carried a joke that he was not telling.

I was received as an old friend. There was never an occasion that Chicherin or Rakovski refused to receive me. There were even fellow journalists who asked me to be intermediary in arranging interviews for them. Ismet Pasha was not less friendly; even on the days when he refused to communicate anything to the Press, he admitted me to his room, and though the subtle oriental told me nothing, I came away with the feeling of having been well received and my friendship for Turkey was confirmed.

These two, the Russians and the Turks, did me little good in the eyes of Allied diplomats and especially of my own. Lausanne had the psychology of a village where everyone knew the other's business, nothing could be done privately, and everything was a matter of comment. The fact that I had free and easy access to the Russians, that I lunched with Chicherin in a public restaurant, and that Ismet Pasha received me when he received no one, induced Lord Curzon to refuse to see me. Only Sir William Tyrrell proved immune to the general British attitude concerning me. He and Admiral Sir Roger Keyes were the only Englishmen who seemed to understand, but then they were both men endowed with more than a fair share of humour. The fact of my being at Lausanne in a journalistic capacity was in itself strange. I was after all the most inappropriate reporter that ever could be imagined, and Sir William who knew my family intimately could only view me as a *mondaine*, bored with the social world and, as he said, "full of curiosity about life."

Had I desired that he should take me seriously I should have despaired, because he laughed. There were others, however, who did not laugh, who said that I was a Bolshevik agent, but Sir William only laughed at them.

Shortly after my return from Rome, Mussolini passed through Lausanne again, but he did not come for the conference; he was on his way to London and dined with Lord Curzon. On that occasion Sir William Tyrrell said to him: "I think that a friend of mine is a friend of yours. . . ." but Mussolini affected never to have heard my name. He looked vague and said that possibly he might have given me an interview with a crowd of other journalists, but he did not remember.

This, when it was reported to me, seemed to me the crowning insult. My whole soul reacted with feminine vengeance. The article I wrote about him was syndicated from Boston to San Francisco, and I had the satisfaction of knowing, months later, that the article got back to him, and that a friend who spoke English perfectly was deputed to translate it to him. He affected to be exceedingly surprised, and said:

"I wonder why Madame Sheridan hates me so?"

He should know!

XII

Half a year had now passed by, and in that half-year I had lived with the irresponsibility of a man. I had seen things that had killed my illusions and my ideals. I had lost faith in the little that I had once believed. I was convinced of the rampant injustice that ruled all things. I saw nations as individuals, selfish, avaricious, unscrupulous, lying. I had nothing left to live up to, and I just let myself go to the demoralizing excitement of adventure pure.

But it had to end. Two children that I had fought for, and towards whom I had undertaken to be father as well as mother, awaited my return. Dick was in England, Margaret in New York. Meanwhile I was steadily approaching that ever-recurring state of financial crisis. All I had earned I had spent. Journeys and hotels left no margin for saving. I could regard my journalistic stunt as a means of seeing Europe free, but I could not regard it in the light of a paying career. It did not pay. I sailed from England with Dick and landed in New York with ten pounds in the world, and a pathetic trust in Providence that I would pick up new work before the paltry sum in my pocket had been spent.

The past six months had been physically wearing but mentally stimulating. At least there had been a truce to anxiety. I realized what life might have been if I had no children. But I had them and I cared for them, and there was no question of shirking the responsibility of them. I could not give them up to others. I *must* fend for them somehow. I was now faced with the necessity of a definite decision. Where should we live? For we must settle somewhere. Margaret was living with a maid in two rooms in a cheap hotel near the school, but even a cheap hotel ceased to be cheap when four of us were included. Miss Spence offered to give her an education, but the cost of living in New York for the benefit of the privilege cost infinitely more than if I paid for their combined education in Europe. Needless to say, the strain of earning and contriving began again to assert itself, and with all the intensity of the previous winter. Our congestion in tiny hotel rooms added to the misery. I felt this time that I had not the courage to persevere. Miss Spence's generous offer must be set aside. We would go and plant ourselves in Berlin. The mark was falling rapidly, my pension might suffice under the circumstances to keep us. A Russian friend had assured me it would. He, knowing my circumstances, assured me that in Berlin I would find a life of culture and art, and "we will look after you."

A half-truth of my dilemma was divulged in the presence of Horace Liveright, my publisher, to a business friend of his. They were surprised. The trouble was, they said, that I did not know how to "sell" myself. Horace's friend said that if he had the management of me he could "sell" me. It was his way of expressing it. He sought around in his mind for an example and then: "Why you are a well-known sculptor—why don't you put your name to practical use? Here's an idea for you. Get hold of Jackie Coogan and do a head of him wearing the 'Jackie Coogan' cap, and have it reproduced by the million and sell them to the hat shops to put in their windows. The copyright of that would be worth thousands of dollars."

My heart of an artist sank right down into my boots. But I was very desperate. For the children's sake I would have descended to God knows what prostitution of my art. The man meant well. He had a genuine desire to help. He even "got on to" the subject, but only to discover that Jackie Coogan in a cap had already been capitalised.

"But there are plenty of other things to do," he said, "for instance instead of that bust you did of Charlie Chaplin that is unrecognizable to the average movie fan, why don't you do a small statuette of him, with his bowler hat and his boots and cane, and have it sold by the million in every picture palace where his pictures are showing?" ("Oh, God," I groaned.)

Two weeks before sailing I got an order to go to Baltimore to do a bust. All my expenses were paid. I worked in the hotel and never once went out. I saw nothing of Baltimore, but I did the bust. Then came another request that I should go to Louisville, Kentucky, and do a newspaper owner. I was faced with the possibility of having a good time as soon as I acquitted myself of my work. But time was running short and I was in a hurry. Why was I in a hurry? asked my host. I said I had to sail on a certain date. Why not cancel the sailing?

"Because," I explained frankly, "I want to get away with the money I have earned before I spend it all on living in New York!"

I did too. I sailed for Hamburg with traveller's cheques to the value of several thousand dollars and a fixed salary for a year from the *New York World* and the *Louisville Courier* combined, for two articles a week from Germany. I said good-bye to America with relief. Livable for some, it had proved utterly unlivable for me. I had not the temperament that can succeed. I did not know, as Horace Liveright's friend said, how to "sell" myself.

PART NINE

GERMANY, SPAIN, RUSSIA, TURKEY

I

BERLIN WAS ALMOST RUSSIA. Thousands of *emigrés* were profiting like myself by Germany's misfortune and had literally taken possession of half the town. A tree-avenued canal in which the stars danced reflectingly at night formed a frontier line between the German and the Russian halves. I found an apartment in a house on the bank of the canal.

On the Russian side all the book shops, provision stores and restaurants were Russian. Russian newspapers were sold in the streets, there was a Russian theatre and Russian music, and a Calvinist church had been adapted to Russian orthodox services. I met Russian professors, philosophers and founders of new religions. Among the writers I met Maxim Gorky, among the sculptors Archipenko, among the painters Grigorief. The children had an *emigrée* lady as governess and an *emigré* gentleman as violin teacher. Margaret attended a dancing class that was managed by a Petrograd ballerina.

In this crazy, crashed world I felt completely in my element. After a while, and with the advent of summer I travelled farther afield for my news. In Munich Mr. Hitler had raised an army of Fascists and threatened violence to the German Republic. That he fizzled out into a mere nothing could not have been foreseen. At the moment he seemed all-important.

In North-East Prussia troops were said to be massing on the Polish frontier. That no war ever did break out does not minimize the apprehension that prevailed. A position that is still untenable was decreed by the Versailles Treaty. Perhaps the war to put it right is only postponed. At all events that end of Europe was simmering with discontent. My visit to North-East Prussia coincided with the dawn of spring. After a trip on the Mazurian Lakes the "Uber-presidium."[1] at Königsberg appointed a Prussian officer to escort me to the show-places, which in my capacity of journalist they hoped I would write up. About thirty miles from Königsberg on the Baltic coast was an exquisite summer resort amid woods of silver birch carpeted with wild lilies of the valley. It sloped precipitously to a sandy beach that was strewn with amber. Russians said that it resembled the Crimea.

The mark was falling recklessly. From day to day, from hour to hour it varied. With the consent of the "Uber-presidium" I was able to buy a land "lot," and by the time the lawyer had drawn up the necessary document I had gained half the purchase price! It was a beautiful piece of land high up on the cliff, out of sight of all other houses, and through the silver stems of a birchwood one beheld the sea. There was almost a Russian fairy-tale atmosphere about it. I set about making plans to build a modern house. A young Königsberg architect, a Balt (that is to say a kind of "hermaphrodite" Russian and Prussian too), who was ambitious and imaginative, and whose first house it was going to be, threw himself into the project with an enthusiasm that was hardly outdone by my own. It was going to be a kind of Russian ballet house!

I thought that this place, situated half-way between London and Moscow would solve my problem; I would (I planned) as easily drop into Moscow as into London. In Moscow my children would assimilate modern ideas and modern art. In this pacifist atmosphere Dick would grow up to be a citizen of the world with a duty to humanity. He would not be encumbered by a nationalistic patriotism that was likely to land him in a battlefield grave. We would, I argued to myself, gain all the advantages that Russia could give us, but because it is human to desire to own something, we would have to own it outside the Russian frontier.

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[1] Local government.

The place I had chosen was not the most accessible place for a *New York World* correspondent's headquarters. I knew however that my journalistic work was transient, and I looked further ahead to the day when I might earn by novel writing and live therefore anywhere I chose. Meanwhile there was plenty of material at hand. Vilna had just been seized from Lithuania by Poland. At Memal there was an incipient revolution. Danzig Free State was always bristling with possibilities, and during the lulls, Prussian-Polish frontier problems, and Polish-Russian politics made good padding. As soon as the children were comfortably installed in a cottage, I decided to revisit Moscow, it was a dream that I cherished, and although I knew conditions had changed in two years and nothing could ever be the same, I felt the necessity of knowing what those changes were. My plans were temporarily frustrated however by news of a *coup d'état* in Spain to which I started off immediately.

On my way through Paris I found my mother. She was full of sentimental emotion, not having seen me for a long time. I was only able to kiss her and say good-bye and snatched Peter from her to accompany me to Madrid. Peter was always ready for an adventure.

There was nothing adventurous, however, about Madrid. It was rather like Rome at the time when Mussolini was new. The same type of *blasé* aristocrats in the hotel *foyers*, the same minor royalties conspicuously preoccupied by their luncheon and dinner parties, to whom love affairs were more important than the political crisis. The King was already being flippantly alluded to as "Secondo de Rivera." I lost no time in applying to "Primo" for an interview. The official reply, which was not long forthcoming, contained a fixed hour and date, and was couched in gallant Castilian style by the secretary of His Excellency the Marquis de

Estella, who signed his name over the initials "s.s.p.b.," which turned out to be the official intimation that he kissed my feet!

The interview was as little thrilling as Madrid itself, but I had the satisfaction at least of being the first foreigner newspaper correspondent to be received, and an Ambassador was kept waiting in the next room while we talked. The General was not in any way impressive unless it is impressive to be (under the circumstances) a simple gentleman. He seemed to be just that, neither fanatical nor dictatorial, neither an actor nor a propagandist—he was charmingly a man of the world, simple, unaffected and sincere. He believed, he said, that he would succeed (success still hung in the balance) because he had with him the three forces that were necessary: the King, the Church and the People.

Peter and I came away well satisfied. We had a "scoop." On arrival in Paris I cabled my interview to the *New York World* and Peter posted his to the *Daily Telegraph*, who published it immediately. As a result of this success I tried to persuade him to abandon his studies for the Bar and take up journalism. It seemed to me that we might hunt in couples and it would have been very pleasant for me. Peter however is no gambler. I was not able to persuade him, and started off alone to Moscow.

It is hardly worth while to dwell at length upon the anguish of that second visit. I went there in great spirits and with high hopes, expecting to witness the smooth working of the great experiment.

Where were the changes, I wondered, that had taken place since my first visit? Details of proletarian government, statistics and economics, interested me little enough. I had always been, at heart, an artist and not a politician, but with the stern sense of journalistic duty, I tried to ascertain some information. My efforts were in vain.

I was relegated to the company of English and American concession hunters in the hotel, who let no occasion pass by that could be turned to Anti-Bolshevist account. I heard nothing but abuse and criticism of the Soviet.

My old friends having failed me, I pinned some hopes on a letter that Maxim Gorky had given me to his first wife (they were divorced). In doing so he explained that she was in a position to introduce me into the artist *monde*. She knew all the young moderns, and moreover her life was interesting; she was a prison inspector! I hired a *droshky*, it was a bitter cold evening, and gave the driver the address. It proved to be in quite a remote part of Moscow, almost a suburb. I had great difficulty in locating the house, and more trouble still in discovering the front door, which was in a backyard. It was a grim cold dark tenement, and the lady in question lived on the top floor. I climbed up the stair, fumbling my way. I found her at last. She was expecting me, for I had sent my letter on ahead.

A middle-aged woman with a set, hard face who might have been good-looking once, received me in a room that contained a large stove, a large table and a horsehair sofa. She gave me grapes to eat and tea to drink. She was dreadfully impassive, and polite. To all my questions she replied "Yes" or "No," and the subject dropped. There were nervous silences. The Russian intellectual woman can be terrible when she is hostile. I realized everything she thought of me. I was a young foreign female whom Gorky had picked up abroad, and whom he sent to her as a last insult! There was an almost sublime dignity in her aloofness and in the simplicity of her black dress buttoned up to the throat. She looked as if she might have played a dramatic part in Gorky's "lower depths." When I got up to go, she accompanied me to the door and almost before I was out she slammed it on my heel. Gorky evidently did not know his wife any better than Kameneff had known his.

After two dull weeks in Moscow during which I saw little that was edifying, and a great deal of public gambling, government controlled, I trekked to Petrograd. There I presented myself to the head of the press-bureau. A little Jew with pince-nez and an American twang was appointed to show me the palaces and museums. He never left my side between breakfast and dinner, for two weeks, except during the hours I spent in the Hermitage. Pictures were not in his line, but he showed me Tsarkoe Selo, where the late Royal family's apartments were preserved intact, and where their lack of taste was pointed out humorously by the guides to the proletariat who apathetically followed round.

My officially appointed companion happened to be a friend of the murderer of the Czar, of whom he spoke (of the murderer) with great pride. From him I received the second-hand account of the dispute that took place between the murder men over the killing of the little Czarevitch after the rest of the family had been shot. Only one man was in favour of killing him, the others protested, but the "friend" of my guide won his way. . . .

Thus may be summed up briefly, one month, which meant eight newspaper articles. What was I to write about this *new* Russia, how circumvent the dreadful anti-climax? I felt as a woman might who, having dreamed reunion with a lover after years of faithful separation, met him and he turned his back upon her. I was heartbroken.

The articles that were written (because articles *had* to be written) were full of disillusion and bitterness. Those same articles the *Daily Express* was pleased to publish. I realized how easy it was to get anti-Russian stuff accepted. When I returned to Berlin my conscience smote me. I went to see a friend in the Russian Embassy, and confessed to him what I had done. I admitted I had acted pettily, femininely, unworthily, but . . . and I laid my forehead on the edge of his work-table and cried! My confessor was quite at a loss to understand the nature of this explosion! How could he understand? He did not know, nobody in fact knew, the place that Russia had occupied in my heart. No one knew the awful hurt of what had happened.

After that I sought forgetfulness in a low haunt among people who, like myself, having miseries to obliterate, took cocaine. Nothing was easier in Berlin. Cocaine was comparatively cheap and easily obtainable. It stimulated the action of the heart, and gave one the courage which is indifference. But instead of inhaling it I emptied a packet into my cup of coffee. It was the end of the night, the café was emptying, and I, with thumping heart, discoloured face and staring eyes, talked to an *emigré* prince who belonged to the Tzigane troupe.

He had changed from his gipsy clothes into an English smoking suit, and with the air of a grand duke led me out into the sunlight of a new day. What I said to him I shall never know, but I remember that he looked at me strangely and asked, "Madame, what has made you so nervous this night?" and he watched me curiously when I walked away with my arm through that of my Russian escort, who was just a little less drugged than myself. For forty-eight hours I suffered torments, my hands turned violet, and the skin of my face shrivelled as if I had been dead some days! Impossible to sleep or eat, my heart gave me no rest. I was violently (if such an adverb applies) wide awake. For five hours I wrote and wrote, committing the wildest thoughts to paper in a handwriting that is unrecognizable. Those pages of effusion I still preserve. They are entirely outpourings about my disappointment of the Russian Revolution.

It is easy to laugh. It was certainly foolish and hysterical, but I *had* cared, I *had* believed. My life had been uprooted, my friends lost, my family alienated, all because of my belief in Russia.

It was winter now. I returned to the Baltic determined to tear up the roots that bound me to East Prussia. The future must unravel in some other direction. I had not an idea where or how, and while I wondered it snowed and snowed and kept on snowing. A wonderful silence prevailed, a silence that one imagined like the desert, for the snow muffled every sound. It was also like death, and harmonized with the funeral in my own heart.

So beautiful however was the place, and our little snowed-up home, that I might have found some difficulty in wrenching myself away, but I was torn from it by a cable from Herbert Swope, who ordered me suddenly to London to "cover" the first Labour Government. I started off, leaving the children and their governess to liquidate everything and follow.

II

Rakovski was Soviet representative in London. I heard through a friend that he was "surprised" I had not been to see him. I had not dared, of course, after the publication of my articles in the *Daily Express*. Having received his message, however, I presented myself at the Bond Street office rather shamefacedly.

Rakovski in all apparent seriousness said:

"You have done us a great deal of harm."

This I could hardly flatter myself, but certainly their champion had turned upon them.

"But you turned on me first," I declared, and explained to him all that had happened. He was a shrewd man and realized much that I left untold. "Nothing," he said, "is so capricious as the friendship of a woman, but you will be given another chance to retrieve your mistake—I will give you a visa for Russia any time you wish to return, only—do not go to Moscow."

It was tantamount to an invitation. I talked it over with Peter. The summer vacation was looming into sight; we had rather little money, for my newspaper work was at an end. I was free but unsalaried. My first novel had been accepted by Duckworth, but was not yet launched. Peter, however, had his motor-bicycle "Satanella," she was two years old but he was confident that he could reach Russia on her.

"If you can do the driving, I certainly can do the sitting in the side-car," I said optimistically.

We set out therefore to cross Holland, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Silesia and Poland, to the Ukraine and the Crimea; our return journey lay across the Tyrol, Switzerland and France. The only sea transport that we envisaged besides the crossing of the Channel was from Odessa to Trieste via Constantinople. Literally, it was the tour of Europe.

It would take too long to describe the details of a trip which amount to a book in themselves, and which have appeared in book form. It was an adventure simply, but it did much to heal the wounds that my second visit to Moscow had inflicted. It is true that we were armed with a letter from Rakovski, whose name was something to conjure with in the Ukraine, where he had been administrator during the revolution, and to whose efforts (ruthless perhaps) order and peace were due. But although Rakovski's letter greased our wheels, we could have managed without it, as testified by the fact that two young women barristers, friends of Peter's, having secured the necessary visa, started off together in a two-seater about the same time and did what we did; only instead of going south from Kiev, they turned north to Moscow. These adventurous girls, without any letters of recommendation, were hospitably received everywhere.

Our motor-bicycle method of travel disarmed those critics at home who try to make out that foreigners in Russia are shown only that which the Soviet official wishes them to see. The Soviet officials in our case were powerless; they could not accompany us, could not send an "interpreter" to watch us, could in fact only offer us hospitality when and where we presented ourselves. We meanwhile, were free to stop when and where we chose, and to talk to all and sundry who came upon our path. We received kindness from peasants, from bourgeoisie, from anti-Bolsheviks, from anarchists, from University professors and all manner of strange and varied people. At Livadia we fetched up quite by chance at the Czar's palace to discover that we could stay in the house of the Imperial suite, which had become a pension.

The park was very beautiful, and we revelled in sea-bathing amid Communist admirals and generals, commissars on holiday, rich Jews affecting to be poor, with their families, a Petrograd doctor and a Moscow bank manager. We learnt much that was of interest, ate a great many peaches and made some friends whom we regretted leaving.

At Sevastopol we visited the Red Fleet, probably the first foreigners allowed on board, and this was all the more surprising as Peter was an ex-naval officer, and his eyes saw things which conveyed nothing to mine. We literally ransacked a cruiser, a destroyer and a submarine!

At Odessa, whilst awaiting the arrival of a passenger ship to take us to Constantinople, I revived the project of living in Russia, and sought for a habitation. The local officials were more than civil, but I came up against an insuperable difficulty; it was financial. I was shown an apartment with rooms facing the sea and was told that I could have it free of rent for two years if I would spend five hundred pounds on renovations. Five hundred pounds they assured me was not a large sum, it was in fact a mere "nothing," and the man who said so was of humble origin, one who could have had nothing before the revolution. In a suburb called "Arcadia" there was a requisitioned villa that served in summer as a rest-house for workers. From November to the end of May it was empty. I asked if I could rent it for those six months. The official who dealt with these things agreed to let me have six rooms in it for 2,000 roubles (£250). It was the price of a villa at Deauville for the season, I told him, but he had never heard of Deauville.

"What is your price?" he asked.

"A hundred pounds a year," I said. He burst out laughing.

"We have no such prices as that in Russia," he answered. Peter was evidently relieved that the privilege (!) of living in the workers' republic proved too expensive for my moderate means! But neither was he very happy when, a very little later, he realized my transfer of plan: Constantinople no longer under Allied Control had regained her hypnotic charm. Why not remain? Why should not this be the end of all further adventures . . . ?

". . . until the next!" said Peter, who is always most unsympathetic when I am most in earnest.

III

It was not until the Russian Embassy in London bought duplicates of all my Soviet heads for Chesham House, and I sold (regretfully) my sable coat, that I was able to realize my cherished plan of settling in Constantinople. An Arcos Company's ship flying the British flag was leaving England for Odessa; it took all my luggage (marble and bronze busts and a library) gratis, and Dick as well. Meanwhile Margaret and I speeded on the Sud Orient Express, and set to work to find a house.

It was not too easy. The Turkish houses, so lovely to look at, whose shabbiness was half their charm, were almost too dilapidated to be safe. Most of them were in a state of collapse. It seemed a matter of conjecture how many nights one would sleep under a roof, and which night one would find oneself in the Bosphorus! I was verging on despair when the Russian Consul, Potemkin, offered me the villa that had once belonged to the Imperial military attaché, now Soviet property, which stood empty, for no one was willing to rent from Bolsheviks. The house stood by the water's edge at Thérapia, and more attractive even than the house was the terraced garden and a walled-in hilltop full of cypress trees. Legend still related the diplomatic scandal of before the War, that was the result of the Russian military attaché's indiscreet purchase of this property. Indiscreet, because at that time it was under the very nose of a secret Turkish fort that commanded the entrance to the Black Sea. But in those days Russia was feared, and the Sultan dared not more than protest. He was obliged to swallow the aggressive arrogance of the Czar.

At Buyukderey, the next village along the coast, stood the Russian summer embassy in a park that measured seven kilometres in circumference, and which contained on an eminence a private wireless station to communicate direct with Moscow. Since the War however, what changes had taken place! The two Empires had become Republics. The winter and the summer Embassies were merely Consular centres. The wireless station in the Buyukderey park was a ruin. The military attaché's house at Thérapia that had been the cause of such scandal stood empty, and the garden a tangle, and even the Turkish fort was now obsolete and abandoned.

The Russian Consulate offered to renovate this house and put in a bathroom if I would sign a three years' lease at 110 English pounds a year. I signed without hesitation, I even asked if I could have it for ten years; I was told I could have it for all my life!

I spent the winter in writing a second novel, the first having been rather well received. It was an ideal work spot and unbelievably beautiful. The sound of the water against the quayside varied with its moods like a song—sometimes it complained and sometimes it appeared to laugh. When sail ships passed close by our windows it was as though a cloud passed before the sun. They came in from the Black Sea like a great phantom Flying Dutchman. Once it was the "Homeric" that took our light and obliterated all view from the windows as she passed.

There were endless distractions. The Bosphorus had more incident than the main street of a large town. Here one saw the flags of every nation: Persian, Soviet, Italian, Greek, Egyptian, Norwegian. Dick got to know them all, he could tell the nationality of a ship as far away as Kavak, the control station at the Black Sea entrance, which to my eyes was a mere speck. Every week the elegant "Gul-Djemal" the Turkish Black Sea passenger steamer, passed by on her way to Samsoun, Kérasonde, Trébisonde and all the Anatolian ports as far as the Russian frontier. Once I decided to do the trip and nearly remained at Trébisonde, for such a lovely monastery on a hilltop dominating the town and sea, was offered to me for nothing if I cared to live in it. The monks had only recently been expelled, the doors stood wide open. A little cloistered line of cells drew me irresistibly. There was a garden full of olive trees, and in the rock an eleventh-century frescoed chapel. The whole in perfect order, with water in well complete.—Trébisonde! A town as beautiful as its name. One might have lived in the monastery secluded from the world for years, and when solitude became oppressive one would have joined a Persian camel caravan on its return journey to Ispahan! There they were on the seashore, resting after the laden journey. Strange wild-looking men, in sky-blue skull caps and long tight coats of faded colours, rolled the oil cake for the groaning brutes! The head man, turbaned, authoritative and black-eyed, shook me by the hand and extended to me an offer of caravan hospitality which was quite as alluring in its way as the wide-open doored monastery on the height. Should one live as a nun, or follow the caravan, or merely return to one's Thérapia home?

I returned to finish my book, and because of the children.

The children! They pursued their studies under the guidance of a Macedonian comitaji, whom I picked up at the Russian Consulate, where in spite of his anti-Communist prejudices he had accepted to work. I thought he looked like Dostoyefski, but most people thought he looked like Rasputin. At all events he had a face like carved ivory, a long black beard and deep-set tragic eyes. He was an anarchist who had been a teacher in the Rousseau school in Paris. His principle was to teach the children when they wanted to learn, and when they did not want to, he distracted them with chemistry, under guise of which he taught them how to make bombs. These they tested on the hilltop unbeknown to me. Sometimes we went sight-seeing and he accompanied us. If I admired anything that was removable, a carved stone for instance, or an inscription in a wall, he offered to give it to me. It mattered little if it were a famous fragment mentioned in guide books or catalogued in museum records. He acknowledged no law of property. If I wanted it he would get it—somehow—in the night, with accomplice friends! I lived in constant dread of receiving some compromising treasure. He did indeed steal a marble tombstone from a cemetery because I had admired the carving. In time we had to part with him, as one parts reluctantly with some magnificent animal that is proved untamable.

Our chief friend, and one upon whom we depended pathetically, was Ismet Bey, the most notoriously beautiful Turk in Péra, who wore a grey astrakhan kalpak as if it were a crown (in a trilby or a bowler, under the new regulations, he must have lost all his charm!). He was a cousin of the then Prime Minister and worked as adviser to the Russian Arcos Company. He was very anti-Bolshevik and they never took his advice, but they paid him a large salary.

Whenever I had anything to say to our cook, who understood not a word of anything but Turkish, I would ring Ismet up on the telephone and beg him.

"Please tell Hassan he must not make scenes in the village café, and threaten to kill the American storekeeper," or, "Please Ismet, we've got friends to dinner, will you order the food?" Whereupon the cook would replace me at the telephone and receive orders!

Life ran very smoothly for a while, too smoothly to last! There were two elements that we could not shut out, the north wind and idle tales! They both had a most disconcerting power of penetration. I tried to shelter from the one and to ignore the other, but their persistence was a perpetual irritation. Soon it was repeated to me that—Constantinople said—(and Constantinople was bristling with

Embassies, and English Levantines and Russian *emigrés*, and every kind of human type that spreads rumours and invents lies)—I was a "red agent." The Soviet Government had, "they" said, given me the house at Thérapia rent free! The fact that I was invited to the British Embassy made me, in the eyes of some, a British agent as well. The word "spy" accompanied my name whenever it was mentioned. In vain Ismet pointed out to people that when a spy has been proclaimed a spy from the housetops, spying (which is supposed to be a secret job) is no longer possible. I must be therefore a pretty poor spy, or more likely not a spy at all! but I no longer wondered why that Russian House on the brink of the Bosphorous had remained vacant so long! One day Ismet gave me advice. He thought that in order to silence my calumniators, I should do well to cultivate a few other nationals. "Why not some French, Persians or Italians?" The chance offered itself quite unexpectedly. General Mougin, the French representative at Angora, arrived in his sky blue uniform and gold embroidered "kepi" with an introductory letter from Hikmet Bey who had once been attaché to the Turkish Embassy in London. Hikmet was now the head of the bureau of Foreign Affairs at Angora, but this introduction to Mougin, far from having a whitewashing effect, plunged me deeper into malevolent cross currents. The French Ambassador at Constantinople and his staff hated Mougin, who, from Angora, transmitted all important business with Paris over their heads. Jealousy and bitterness were rampant. The Ambassador did not bow to Mougin when he met him in the street. It was a ridiculous diplomatic situation. Mougin's friendship for me was a weapon in the hands of his enemies. According to them he had allowed himself to be ensnared in the net that the "red agent" had spread for him. Franklin Bouillon, on the occasion of another "rush" trip to the East, dared not see me, the friend of old times. He too feared to be tarred with the same brush. "But go you

. . ." he said to Mougin, who was already so tarred it did not matter, "and present Madame my compliments."

I decided on a visit to Angora. Hikmet Bey placed his mud house (all houses were mud houses at Angora) at my disposal. As it was difficult to find accommodation in the overcrowded village that had become a capital, I accepted thankfully Hikmet's invitation, and I did the journey with Mougin. On the same train happened to be Potemkin, and several of the Russian Consulate staff. There were some Turkish officials as well, in fact a train load of friends.

Shortly after my arrival at Angora, Hikmet asked me in all seriousness:

"Why don't you do things more discreetly! I am informed by someone who was on your train that, in the middle of the night, you went into the Russian Consul's sleeper, and recounted to him the contents of General Mougin's valise!"

"And you believe that?" I exclaimed, scarcely knowing whether to laugh or cry.

Mougin, however, was no coward. The things that were said about me angered but did not alienate him. He fought my battles, but the more he defended me, the more his people said he had been completely duped! The French military attaché at Constantinople said that knowing me had ruined Mougin's promising career. Mougin's career diplomatically however was "up." After six years of indefatigable effort for France, he was about to abandon the position to an Ambassador and return to his military duties.

"But I cannot bear to leave you in this den of wolves!" he said and urged me to pack up my tent and trek. Always ready for change, I asked only: "Where ——?"

"*En Algerie!*" said Mougin in the same tone that Frenchmen say "*La France!*" He declared that in Algeria we would find: peace, beauty, colour of the Orient, eternal summer, Arabs, desert—combined with Western civilization, "and material for a hundred books!"

Before he had ceased to tell about Algeria I had decided to live in the desert.

We packed up all we possessed, which amounted to three and a half tons, and sailed on a French cargo boat, but at the last with heavy hearts, for we loved our Turkey. As the minarets of Stamboul faded into opalescent evening mist, Margaret sobbed:

"I can't bear it! Every time I grow to love a place and it becomes home, we uproot and go away."

"This is the last time," I promised her. It was a rash promise. We could hardly tell what lay before us. We were facing the unknown, a country we had not seen, and in which we knew not one human soul. . . .

THE END

THE END

ON THE EDGE OF AN OASIS, standing on high ground above a river bed, a garden faces East. To the north the Aurès Mountains form a wall against Europe and Western civilization. To the south infinite space—the Sahara desert.

Through the stems of the date palms that rise like towering plume-crested columns I look out upon the world beyond my garden. Sometimes a long straggling camel caravan passes slowly by in the dried up "oued." In the autumn with a sudden roar and rush the floods pour down from the mountains, sweeping all before them. All, that is, except the tomb of Sidi Sersour, white and dome roofed, which stands miraculously untouched in the middle of the river bed.

Every Arab knows that when the waters come they will divide as they approach Sidi Sersour, as they have divided ever since the year when the Prophet's army conquered North Africa to the Atlantic, and Sidi Sersour, his general, fell in battle.

Lakdar the gardener is in the palm tops. It is the moment for fertilizing the date blooms. As he inserts the date pollen into the sheath of the embryo dates, he recites a little verse of the Koran invoking God's blessing upon the fecundity of his act. Lakdar is not concerned with anything in the world except palms and water; life itself depends on these two, and the one on the other.

Beneath a twisted and venerable olive tree that sheds its frail white bloom, I sit on a carpet of many colours woven of camel wool, the manuscript of a new book lies scattered around, but the contemplative character of the Arab has laid hold of me, I realize that like Fromentin, I too love "the blue without clouds above the desert without shadows."

I see pictures of the kaleidoscopic past, which accentuate by contrast the serenity of the present.

It is the sunset hour. The opposite river bank is illumined like an orange ribbon. Beyond it the Aurès, pink and purple, reflect the sinking sun. The desert space that joins the sky is luminous with light. A sudden stir in the garden obliges me to look around with the feeling of one who is disturbed at prayer. Lakdar is hurrying towards a tall burnoused figure whom he kisses reverently on the shoulder. My visitor is the Bash-Agha, chieftain of all the oases and tribes that extend from the Aurès far into the southern desert. He walks across the garden with great dignity, weighed down by his ample gold embroidered burnous. He wears a high turban swathed around with camel hair cords of brown and black, entwined with gold. I am reminded of Bellini's picture of Mohamed the Conqueror. His nose and brow betray the breeding of his pure race and his descent from kings. After our exchange of greetings he seats himself on the multi-coloured carpet, and his servant, a giant negro swathed in white, squats at the foot of a palm tree out of sound.

The beauty of the evening is beyond words; I am overwhelmed by a sense of gratitude to Allah for His great goodness.

As we sit there on the terraced edge above the river bed that is wide and deep, we are both wrapped in meditative contemplation.

We stare before us.

What does my impassive companion see in that void? What do I see?

A cloud of dust looms up from beyond. It approaches. I see a phantom procession marching in irregular formation. It comes nearer—it passes by—I recognize the living and the dead, friends and foes of the past, ghosts all of them. Some look up at me:

A little curly-headed boy with wistful face and dressed in a white sailor suit runs ahead. He has seen me, he raises one hand, as it were a sign, and calls out: "*N'aie pas peur, petite sœur*, We are allies!" I raise a finger in corroboration, "Until death, PETER."

A flushed angry woman is hurrying after him. "Ah, MADEMOISELLE, I have always wished to see you again to tell you that you spoilt our childhood." She hesitates, she seems very small now, very insignificant: "Your parents never paid me, and that is why I hated you."

A sad-faced King in the prime of his life follows, he turns aside from his beautiful Queen. "Oh, MILAN, my 'savage,' see, I wear your ruby heart on my finger always; it reminds me of a transient happiness in childhood's monotony."

"And you, horseman in a pink coat! Thank you for those Irish hunting days."

I see a bewildered figure wearing his Cambridge rowing scarf like a cowl; at his side a golden haired American Brunhilde his wife, the daughter of Governor Ide: "Oh, SHANE! Why did you not become a monk? Why did you not become a Sinn Feiner? Why did you sacrifice your soul to your style? Where is the lock of hair I gave you?"

"HENRY JAMES! Oh, beloved Uncle Henry, how many things I have longed to tell you since you went away!"

"Hello, MUNTHE! It's the simple life in earnest now! Come and share my Arab cous-cous dish!"

WILFRED passes in his tattered uniform leading Elizabeth by the hand. Her hair is golden like the desert sand at sunset: "You ask me why I have chosen this place? Because though all the world may go to war no reverberation of it will touch us here, and Dick may yet be safe. They took my husband, but I will never give my son."

PRINCESS MARGARET with a baby in her arms—there seems to be a halo of light around her. I think I see the vision of a saint. She is like a statue carved in crystal.

LANTERI smiles shyly and hurries by as if he feared that I might thank him for his generous help.

TWEED laughs and throws something. I dodge it—is it a stone or the old plumb line?

WINSTON, arm-in-arm with Birkenhead. You are right Winston, it *is* something after all, to be fed and clothed and sheltered!

RUDYARD KIPLING! How unforgivingly he looks the other way.

"Ghost of ASQUITH! How discouraging you were!"

And there is OSWALD BIRLEY: "Do you remember, Oswald, those jolly days when you painted me and I 'sculpted' you, and we had marvellous parties in our studios? What fun those days were!" He pauses and looks up. "I stuck to my work, Clare. It may be more prosaic, but it pays in the end. You are no longer a sculptor or a journalist or a novelist or an adventuress, or even a worldly woman. You belong to no country. Your friends are scattered over the globe. You are faced with loneliness. Why didn't you listen to me?"

"Oh, chivalrous and noble AMERICAN disguised in the uniform of an army colonel! You gave so much, and you asked so little. I shall remember always your round smiling face, and your shining bald head. God bless you!"

And you, smiling boy! I could not accept your fortune . . . nor yours, fastidious Hollander, because I did not love you.

"Hullo, KAMENEFF! I'm not surprised you look self-conscious. You had a generous impulse, but you lacked the courage to see it through! What do you say? 'You made me'?—'Yes, after a fashion.' "

LENIN of Leningrad! "You see I wasn't such a bourgeoise as you thought." He turns and smiles: "Forgive me, I was so overworked."

"Oh, TROTZKI! Why didn't I go with you to the Front, Tovarish?" He jerks his Mephistophelian beard towards me: "You didn't trust me!"

There go BARNEY BARUCH and HERBERT SWOPE. "I stretch out my hand towards you, B.B. Once when you were a king in Babylon, I was your Christian slave! Hullo, Herbert, are you not tired yet?"—"Hullo, Clare, I bet you don't stay long where you are!"

PRESIDENT OBREGON shakes the stump of his arm at me. "I couldn't tell you at the time, but they said you were a Bolshevik and you know we are tired of revolutions in Mexico!"

DE LA HUERTA smiles sadly. "My revolution failed. I envy you your desert."

GEORGE MOORE! Whiter than ever. "Are you still bent on rewriting and perfecting? Is Posterity your only thought, are you independent at last of the filthy necessity of earning money?"—"Of course I am only concerned with perfecting. . . . *The Lake*, for instance. I left out in the original text the actual heart of the book. Don't speak to me of 'Evelyn Innes' or 'Sister Theresa.' They are not worthy to be included . . ."

"But just suppose, G.M., if Michael Angelo had destroyed all his early work!"

"RORY O'CONNOR! I salute you, hero!"

DE VALERA striding energetically, waves at me his document Number Two.

"MICHAEL COLLINS! Child of destiny and son of trouble, you are at peace, and so is Ireland."

"BERNARD SHAW, I didn't mention you in my book because you didn't really have any part in my life, but I like you very much and yours is the only great man's wife who does not spoil her husband's stories."

There's CHARLIE CHAPLIN, he blows me a kiss. "Dear Charlie, how funny it would have been if . . . and on the whole not so unsuitable but . . ."

"Hail, H. G. WELLS! What do you say? That you will be even with me yet? We'll see!"

"Hail, MUSTAPHA KEMAL, PASHA GHAZI (in a bowler hat)! Why such a cold, stately bow? Yes, I came upon the scene too late, and left just a little too early. It was foolish of you to be so influenced by Latifé."

"Mussolini, I have taken your advice and made my heart a desert!"

"Stamboulisky, most courteous peasant. If they had not brutally murdered you, I certainly would have returned to Bulgaria."

"Oh! King Boris! Think if the scheming mother next door could have foreseen that long after the Greek throne has passed away the Bulgarian throne would still remain!"

"Queen Marie! So the curtain of your stage has been rung down at last, and the heavy new crown has to be set aside, and rumour says that you mean to adopt the nun's veil . . . actress to the last! Although you do not like me, you smile, for you know you are beautiful when you smile."

"Primo de Rivera! How well you salute." (He delegates someone to kiss my feet. What charming manners!)

"Robert Hichens! It's taken me twenty years, old friend, to reach this place that you described!"

There's Mougin, in his sky-blue faded uniform. "Well, you see I took your advice. Do I regret it? Of course not. Were you right? It is all that you said it was and more besides? Have I not found under the protection of La France the peace that I sought so long? *Mais oui, mon Général.*"

Why, there go St. John Brodrick and Madeleine Midleton, the only two people in the world who have looked through the uncurtained windows of my married days! "Your genius for friendship makes me love the world!"

"Greeting to you, Rosita Forbes, my sister wanderer! You told me that if ever I allowed myself to own anything I would lose my freedom, lose my lust for wandering . . . you were right. I have found contentment, I seek no further . . . and you . . . ?"

My Father has a radiancy about him. Perhaps he has started to hatch rainbow trout in the rivers of Paradise? Perhaps he has formed a league of British Imperialist angels to sing Kipling. Perhaps he has found that God is a Bimetallist! At all events he must know that I have not been a "butterfly in the sun." I have reached right down "to the plot and plan of life." I will not "*have to account for years of lost opportunity.*"

Nadejda Stancioff! our different ways seem to have led us to the same conclusion: you to the Scotch Highlands and me to the Sahara Desert. Peace at last!

Sir Mathew Nathan's deep voice rings out: "I told you it would all come right in the end ——"

"Madame, what are you looking at? What do you see?"

It is the voice of my companion whose presence I had forgotten. He has broken the spell for me, he has brought me back to myself.

"I was thinking . . ."

"Thinking with such intensity? May one ask whether your thoughts concerned God or man?"

"My thoughts were about the past and the future."

"The Past belongs to man, but the Future to God!" The colours have faded from the sky, a luminous blue enshrouds the world that is the more beautiful in contrast to the garish splendour.

"I was wondering, Bash Agha, whether I am at the beginning of a new life, or if it is the end?"

With a gesture of his long supple hands, suggestive almost of prayer, and implying his complete surrender to the Divine purpose, the Arab chieftain answers with fatalistic resignation, one word:

مكتوب 'MEKTUB'
("Whatever is to be, is written.")

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